BIG BOSS: RENTALA CHANDRASEKHAR ON SPREADING E-GOVERNANCE p6

NATIONAL SECURITY: LOOKING FOR ALIBIS p18

THE LAW: PROBES TO NOWHERE p20

***gfiles* INITIATIVE:** CITIZENS' PETITION FOR POLL REFORMS p30

FIRST STIRRINGS OP GAHROTRA p32

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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

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S Ayyappan

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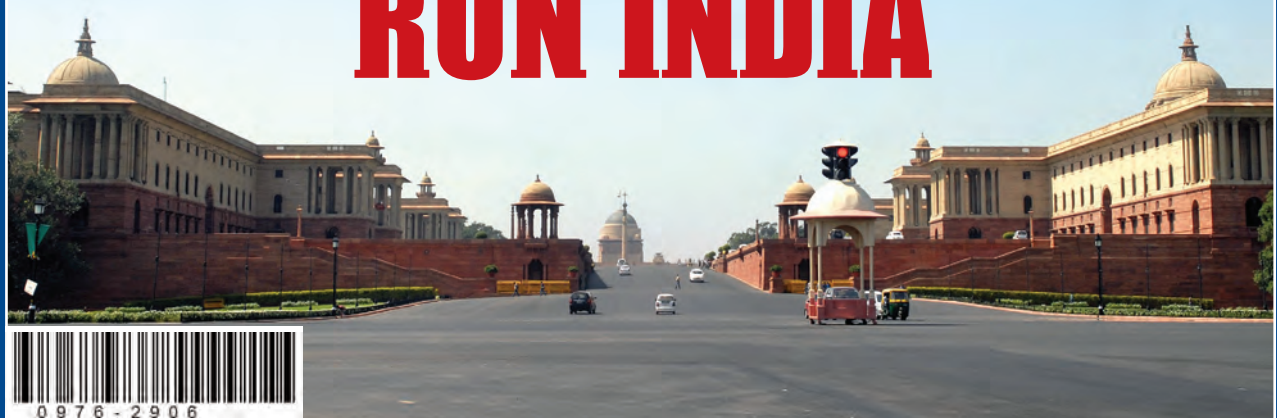
THE PEOPLE WHO RUN INDIA



0976-2906

Historic Decision of Haryana Government

Old Age Allowance Increased from Rs.300 to Rs.700

To respect our elders is our social and moral duty. Such values are deeply embedded in our culture and tradition. Old Age Allowance is aimed at upholding the dignity of our senior citizens.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana

- Those persons who have been getting Old Age Allowance from last ten years, to get Rs.700/- per month as Old Age Allowance.
- The amount of Old Age Allowance has been increased from Rs.300/- to Rs.500/-. There would be an annual increase of Rs.50/- per year in this and it would be reviewed every 4 years.
- A survey would be conducted every year to include fresh beneficiaries.
- A provision of Rs.501/- has also been made for giving shawls to women and 'pagri' and 'dogga' to men.

IPRDH/Samvad

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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

VOL.4, ISSUE 7 | OCTOBER 2010

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THE open letter to our Prime Minister from a retired IAS officer outlines what are perhaps the three cardinal challenges to governance in this country: poverty alleviation and the creation of a social security network; law and order and the alienation of tribal populations who are not only utterly deprived of a share of India's expanding economic pie but are also unaware of the existence of the pie itself; and tackling the political demands of alienated groups like the separatists in the Kashmir Valley who pose not just a law and order problem but also a challenge to national security.

Some will argue that these problems persist because we are a "soft state" as against the examples of Stalinist Russia and Maoist China who either swept such issues under the carpet or simply annihilated or confined to labour camps uncomfortable opponents, ethnic groups, dissident peasants and small landowners by dubbing them enemies of the state or agents of capitalist encirclement.

But in many ways, thank God, we are a "soft state" in the sense that there is no instrument of government policy – notwithstanding gross human rights abuses and police excesses such as custodial deaths–that supports pogroms or the crushing of peasant revolts or even differences based on ethnic and caste factors with murderous ruthlessness.

In general, our "soft state" has often saved us from lengthy tyranny. But this does not mean it has protected us from the tyranny of bad governance that also takes a huge toll of human freedom in terms of corruption, non-performance, rampant injustice and economic inequality.

Our retired IAS officer focuses on NREGA, the Naxalites and the Kashmir separatists as symbolizing the extant grassroots problems of administration and governance that a government formed by any party can ignore only at its own peril and the larger peril of our nation.

He suggests some *via media* solutions such as fixed pension plans, and also does well to focus on the controversy about distribution of free grain. And herein lies the rub for a rapidly developing country like India. How far should populism go? What is the point at which populism begins to undermine the 9-10 per cent growth rate that must be sustained for at least a decade if poverty levels are to be reduced incrementally?

If the engines of wealth creation are completely derailed then who will create the wealth that must ultimately be shared equitably so that the yawning economic divide in this nation is lessened and consequent social tensions avoided?

Opposition to wealth generation through natural resources like land, metal, oil and gas is today rapidly becoming the politically correct language. If this remains an unbridled phenomenon then capital and skills, both domestic and foreign, will flee India and we will create another West Bengal disaster story in the entire country. Finding the right balance is the critical challenge facing the government today. Those who find the right answers and implement them as practical solutions rather than hiding behind doctrinaire vote-bank positions or supporting crony capitalism will be the true leaders of the new India. I hope the people whom we have put on this issue's cover are paying careful attention.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

CONTENTS

6 Big Boss
rentala chandrasekhar speaks about e-governance

12 Bric-a-Brac
of politicos — dependent, independent and self-reliant

14 Cover Story
snapshots of the goi's movers and shakers

16 Spotlight
election permutations and combinations in west bengal

18 National Security
why are india's political leaders not proactive in tackling problems?

20 The Law
the muffling of inquiries involving the high and mighty

22 Talk Time
anil kakodkar chats about india's nuclear programme

26 dcp jaspal singh discusses policing delhi's central district

28 National Issues
a retired bureaucrat writes to the pm on issues facing the country

30 *gfiles* Initiative
we reproduce a citizens' petition

32 First Stirrings
op gahrotra looks back on solving tax collection problems and vat

35 Book Review
a look at our heads of government

37 Stock Doctor
watch your step, you'll make money

42 By the Way
what a little bird told us about banks, babus and policemen

Keep hammering away, *gfiles*!

I am stumped at *gfiles*' turning over a new activist leaf in the last couple of months, including reduction in its price. Congratulations. *Der aaye, durust aaye.* Better late than never.

The Praful Patel story (August issue) not creating a furore in the country points to the magazine's reach. You will have to seriously think about the issue. However, you must keep hammering away, to attract notice. Also employ innovative ways to do that. We can put our heads together. In the September issue the stuff is promising. Wish you all the best in the new avatar.

SC Nagpal *(Retd Chief Commissioner of Income Tax), via email*

Everyone in the aviation industry knows the Civil Aviation Minister is pro-Jet Airways and is trying to destroy the reputation of AI and have it shut down so that he can gain much from the private airlines. I would like to see what the government does about it. Will it take action and save its flag carrier or see it run aground by Mr Patel?

David Samuel *on blog*

Our freedom fighters gave their lives to this country whereas these politicians are taking away the livelihood of their countrymen. Their children will pay for the harm they are doing to others.

Asha, *on blog*

Praful Patel must be hanged for raping AI/IC. He has used tax-payers' money and shown favour to Jet Airways.

Dinshaw *on blog*

Has a PIL been filed? This is too much. Please take it up and punish these criminals. The saddest part is, the Finance Minister and the top brass of this government know everything. But they are quiet! They took a kickback from the aircraft deal to finance the last election!

Jayshree, *on blog*

Keep up the good work, folks. Let the robbers be brought to book.

DH Shah, *on blog*

It is disgraceful! First Mr JRD Tata was made to resign as Chairman of Air India which he founded and now this! With the corruption at the ministerial level, sadly, India will never progress. I suggest that the airport be renamed JRD Tata International Airport so that the people of India know who in fact gave the aviation gift to India.

Guloo Austin, *on blog*

Largely innocent, not allowed to be educated, deprived Indians, living in rural India, even urban, today feel stumped and bowled by the elected leaders who, instead of parenting, have turned out to be greedy and rogues. Truant bureaucrats have connived and critically delayed judicial actions e.g. Union Carbide, Satyam, Reliance, even Uphaar. Visit nnfi.org.in.

For NNFI, trustee Promod Chawla, *on blog*

Make bureaucrats accountable

NR Narayana Murthy's comments are very relevant ("The Augean Stables", September issue). At present civil servants function like rulers. They should be made accountable as in the case of corporate CEOs and their payout. More than 90 per cent civil services officers become corrupt, irresponsible and indulge their own interests. They must be given the task of accomplishing targets and their pay and promotion should be linked to it. Fear plays a vital role in this community. Their powers should also be curtailed and should be specific to the salary format.

Hriday Joshi, *on blog*

Farmers' Interests - Top Priority

Sh. Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana

Increase In Rate Of Compensation For Land Acquisition A Pro-Farmer Decision

Compensation and Royalty On Land Acquisition

- Minimum floor rate of Rs. 15 lakh per acre as compensation for land acquisition for urban areas falling under Gurgaon Development Plan has been enhanced to Rs. 20 lakh per acre. Minimum floor rate of Rs. 16 lakh per acre has been fixed in place of earlier Rs. 12.5 lakh per acre for sub-urban areas of Haryana under NCR, Panchkula and Chandigarh periphery whereas for rest of areas of Haryana a rate of Rs. 8 lakh per acre has been fixed in place of earlier Rs. 5 lakh per acre.
- For those farmers of the State whose land has been acquired by Haryana State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation after March 5, 2005, the State Government has decided to provide a compensation of Rs. 15,000 per acre on per year basis for 33 years in the form of Royalty besides giving them fixed compensation. The same would be increased by a fixed sum of Rs. 500 per year.
- In case of land acquired to set up an SEZ, Technology Cities and Technology Parks, the annuity would be at the rate of Rs. 30,000 per acre for 33 years to be paid by the developers. The annuity would be increased by Rs. 1000 per year.

IPRDH

'e-governance will provide services to citizens at their doorsteps'

CHANDRASEKHAR, who pioneered the concept of e-governance in India through Hyderabad's evolution into "Cyberabad" and played a pivotal role in formulating the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), established the first Department of Information Technology in the country, in Andhra Pradesh, and was its Secretary from June 1997 to December 1999. With an MS degree in computer science from Pennsylvania State University, US, and an MSc degree in chemistry from IIT, Mumbai, Chandrasekhar began his IAS career in 1975. The subject of this interview is the national policy, strategy and action plan for e-governance implemented by him in his previous post as Secretary, Information Technology. He was conferred the PM's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in 2007-08.

interviewed by ANIL TYAGI

gfiles: *How much progress has been achieved under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) that was launched by your department in May 2006 to "make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality"?*

Rentala Chandrasekhar: There are two parts to e-governance: 1) enabling the services' delivery everywhere; 2) enabling people anywhere to access that service. You are referring to the second part: service delivery platform. In a very broad sense, in villages we cannot expect people to have their own computers and access services. So we have the concept of assisted aid, we have service delivery points. The infrastructure of these points, called Common Service Centres (CSCs), is spread across all the villages. The initial programme was to reach one lakh villages and cover all the panchayats, going up to 2.4 lakh by 2012. To make these CSCs ready for delivering services, they need to have computers, power, connectivity and trained operators, who are incentivised to provide services in the villages. This is being done under this scheme.

gfiles: *What have you achieved?*

RC: We have about 8,000 CSCs in place. Each is expected to cater to around six villages. The business of government is conducted by several departments and agencies. So, to enable their services to be provided digitally, they need to do certain things within their department and in common. For example, the Department of Land Record or the Revenue Department in a State has to digitize all the land records and make them available through a network medium on the internet. Typically, this will be done by hoisting on a data centre and providing access to that centre. Then, anybody can access it either from a service centre or his personal computer.

So, the departments have to convert their operations into digital mode. What the Department of Information

RAJEEV DABRAL

'Evaluation of land records, transport services are based on a methodology by IIM, Ahmedabad, and National Institute of Smart Governance.'

Technology (DIT) does is provide a common platform and certain common infrastructure which makes the job easier. First, there is a network which connects the State headquarters to the district headquarters and further down up to the block and tehsil levels. That eliminates the necessity for each department to set up its own network. The data centre at each State headquarters allows everybody to store the data securely at a centralized location where all the necessary technical support is available.

gfiles: *Have the State governments been successful in digitization?*

RC: Out of the 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs), 11 are in the State sector, nine in the Central sector and seven in the integrated sector which covers both State and Central governments. There are only two projects yet to be approved and three are in the final stages of approval. Other projects are in the process of implementation by the departments concerned in various States. Some of them have been completed – the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) functions online, and some other services are also available online like income tax, excise, passports, courts, land records, transport and so on.

One of the MMPs is called e-Districts under which States have been funded for various kinds of high volume services for simple and routine government services like caste certificate, income certificate, birth certificate and filing an RTI application. So, these services for which a large number of people come to government offices, district and subordinate offices are covered under the e-Districts project which is under implementation in about 14 States and 40 districts.

Now, we are taking necessary steps for obtaining an approval for nationwide roll up. It has been completed in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In other States, it is nearing completion as far as pilot districts are concerned. It demonstrates to citizens the benefit of getting these services and facilities and provides government servants in various organizations and departments hands-on experience of how this system functions, their role and the revised relationship between the government and citizens.

gfiles: *Are CSCs functioning as the front-end delivery points for*

government, private and social sector services to rural citizens in an integrated manner?

RC: Absolutely. The intention of e-governance in all these areas is to provide services to citizens at their doorsteps. We have had evaluation of land records, transport sector services and property registration, based on a methodology developed by IIM, Ahmedabad, and the National Institute of Smart Governance and carried out by an independent third party, SSR, on random sampling basis with actual surveys by market research agencies.

According to those surveys there has been a significant reduction in the number of trips people have to make to government offices, in the wait for a service as well as the incidence of bribery. There is not yet an adequate number of services enabled. It was clear from the outset that all government services will not become available overnight. It takes time. Therefore, the CSCs were set up to bring the infrastructure into place.

gfiles: *Do you face problems regarding broadband? What's the bandwidth available to you?*

RC: The assessment revealed that there are areas of concern.

1 Power: in most villages power is still a problem. This is being addressed in two ways – one is by using low power consuming devices like laptops. Today, there are extremely low cost chips, having rugged devices so that you don't need air conditioning. The other is use of generators and solar power. TERI, which is the energy partner for the CSC scheme, has come up with an integrated 350-watt solution using solar power which has been tried out in a few locations.

2 Connectivity: Again, connectivity, especially broadband, is an issue in rural areas. That is being tackled in two or three different ways. One, under the scheme itself, BSNL was asked to provide wireless connectivity to the CSCs. Through this, connectivity for the CSCs which don't have a high bandwidth landline available was covered. Right now, the broadband available with us is very limited. With 3G auctions completed and broadband wireless auctions underway, we expect acceleration of broadband availability in villages. So the rollout of the CSCs, connectivity and services has to be synchronized, though done independently. Considering the challenges and number of different agencies involved, considerable headway has been made and services are now visible in many places.

gfiles: *What is the status of the e-Courts project? Would it help the government restore the* aam aadmi*'s faith in the rule of law?*

RC: One of the MMPs is the e-Courts project that is being implemented through the Ministry of Justice and they have certain mechanisms through which the courts are involved in overseeing the project. In the MCA, all filing is done electronically. In income tax, electronic filing by a company is mandatory. Individuals are also allowed to file though it's not mandatory. Similarly, for filing a court case, there are approximately 13,000 court locations across the country. In any case, connectivity up to block and tehsil level is available under this scheme.

The data centres are now being established in the State headquarters but the key challenge is to do the computerization within the courts – the operations of the courts, judgements, case diaries, filing and registration and the like.

gfiles: *One of the nine Central MMPs is the national citizens database. Is it distinct from the project of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) under the Planning Commission?*

RC: Actually, this project originated in 2006 when the NeGP was approved and the idea was really to have a citizen or resident ID mechanism to facilitate service delivery. In most services there are two things necessary. One is identification for a person to receive or apply for any service. The second is the payment mechanism. So these are two types of common services which need to be integrated into e-governance service. Today, there are certain activities being undertaken under the creation of the National Population Register (NPR) alongside the census. This is being done by the Registrar General of India (RGI) of Census of India. Again, there are primary departments who handle this. We

'TERI, the energy partner for the CSC scheme, operates an integrated 350-watt solution using solar power which has been tried out in a few locations.'

'Quality manpower, infrastructure, IPR protection, a clear IT Act are the instrumentalities of civilized democracies to protect information.'

only provide some support wherever required in terms of common infrastructure and so on.

gfiles: *Isn't there some kind of duplication between NeGP and UIDAI?*

RC: There is a certain amount of apparent duplication but there is a mechanism for coordination because they address slightly different areas. NPR is being done by the RGI and it is required under the law. UIDAI is to facilitate service delivery. In fact, there is a coordination committee between the Home Ministry, UIDAI and Department of IT on a continuous basis to ensure that not only actions are coordinated but overlaps are eliminated in the execution. For example, under the NPR, service delivery and provision of services is not a primary focus, there are security concerns and other issues. If you look at UIDAI, service delivery is a paramount concern and delivery of welfare benefits and financial services are also very important.

gfiles: *How far has the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) succeeded in its objective of routing domestic traffic within the country instead of taking it all the way to the US? Will this strategy help reduce cyber attacks on Indians?*

RC: Significant progress has been made in the NIXI. A number of centres have been set up where the traffic gets aggregated and routed locally, the idea being that internet traffic originating from India and destined for India shouldn't go out of India for routing. NIXI has the participation of industry players and representation from the Department of Telecommunications. It's an organization chaired by the Secretary of DIT but it's an autonomous company.

gfiles: *Will it benefit India security-wise or so?*

RC: When the traffic is routed within the country, the cost will get optimized. Cyberspace is completely global but the laws of a country are applicable within it. If the origin and destination are within India, then the implementation of legal provisions becomes much simpler and can be done strictly. This is certainly helpful as far as security aspects are concerned.

gfiles: *Has the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 proved to be adequate for ensuring national cyber security? If not, what is in the works?*

RC: Security consists of several different actions. Legal provisions are only one part of cyber security. The IT Amendment Act has to provide adequate basis to take all the steps required to ensure security. The office of the Chief Controller of Certifying Authority (CCA) has been set up after the 2000 Act. This created a mechanism for digital and electronic signatures which provides a basis for secure transaction.

gfiles: *Do you have any data to show how we compare with the world in cyber security?*

RC: Yes, there is continuous exchange of information between the searches in different countries, passing on information to one another about threats and attacks or about patterns. Such data is available and patterns are shifting. At different points of time you find more attacks coming from a particular source and more attacks taking place within some countries. There was an incident which brought down the whole infrastructure in Estonia, and also in the US and Korea.

gfiles: *Are you finding it difficult to take action in cases of defacement?*

RC: Yes. There are two parts to it. One is that you are taking action against the attacker. That becomes difficult if the attacker is not located in the country or is using resources in some other country. But protecting yourself also means you should not make yourself so vulnerable. So, certain steps are being taken in terms of advising people about the measures they need to take to secure themselves, the practices to avoid such attacks or, even if such an attack takes place, to ensure that you do not succumb to it.

gfiles: *Has DIT put in place any strategy to remove periodic misgivings in the US, the UK and elsewhere on outsourcing of IT-enabled jobs to Indian BPO units?*

RC: As far as arrangements for business process outsourcing in India are concerned, it's well recognized that India is a very good destination for provision of such services. We have good quality manpower, infrastructure, IPR protection, strong legal framework and clear IT Act. So all the necessary instrumentalities of any civilized democratic set-up to protect infor-

mation are there. The contractual laws are also in place.

gfiles: *How is it that DIT does not have any commercial PSUs under its administrative control?*

RC: When the liberalization of the economy began in 1991, several sectors were liberalized early. IT was one of them. The IT industry grew to be globally competitive within a decade. There is no need for the government to continue to have a PSU in that space when there are so many competent and active private sector companies. The role of the department has become largely supportive and facilitative.

gfiles: *How do you estimate the market for computers in India?*

RC: It's a completely globalized market. It's a very high-volume, low-margin and high-velocity business. All the three parameters are there in this business, so there are several factors which are taken into account by investors when they invest in a particular location. Second, the investment in India is not necessarily made solely on the basis of the Indian market demand, but on global market demand. The third aspect is that one has to look at the kind of demand and supply balance on the global basis and there is actually supply surplus globally. It's a matter of time before the desirable investment happens in India.

gfiles: *Is there any plan to unveil an incentive scheme for other electronic components such as passive components?*

RC: Shortly after this government took office, the Minister constituted a task force on IT, covering software services, electronic hardware and manufacturing. The main focus was getting the manufacturing sector promoted in the country because that was one area where we felt we needed to do much more. So the task force was set up with all the industry people covering different areas like IT hardware electronic components, consumer electronics, telecommunication equipment, medical electronics and so on. The task force, with Ajay Choudhary as chairman and Kiran Karnik as co-chairman, has made a number of recommendations which have been analysed and shared by other Ministries. We have had several rounds of discussions with the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC). Now, taking the views of the industry, the department, NMCC and other Ministries involved, the issue has been taken to the Committee of Secretaries after which it will go to the Cabinet.

gfiles: *Why has India not been able to replicate its software exports success story in the field of hardware exports?*

RC: The task force on manufacturing and other things has made a number of recommendations, one of them being establishment of clusters for hardware manufacturing. As I mentioned earlier, this sector is high-volume, low-margin and high-velocity, it requires very good infrastructural support and trade facilitations for moving in and out. Trained manpower is not a problem in our country. So what we are looking at in the task force report is that we need to build our hardware industry by extending and expanding our strengths in R&D, design, prototype manufacturing and testing. We need to build all-round in this context rather than simply going for just manufacturing in terms of getting high volume because, first and foremost, it's a relatively low-value addition area.

'With 3G auctions completed and broadband wireless auctions underway, we expect acceleration of broadband availability in villages.'

gfiles: *The mobile telephone revolution has been propelled by a drop in service tariff and in price of handsets. Is it possible to achieve a similar drop in the prices of other electronic products such as laptops, LCD televisions and washing machines?*

RC: We have witnessed a huge drop in the cost of telecom services, especially the cost of bandwidth – fuelled, to a large extent, by technology. Higher bandwidth is available at lower cost due to technological advantages. As far as equipment like computers is concerned, material cost is involved. Therefore, technological advancement will obviously bring down prices substantially. Every year, there is reduction in the cost of computers.

For making computers more affordable, there are two things. 1) Proliferation of services and growth in different kinds of services which bring down the cost. 2) Growth of business models which does not involve the capital cost. For example, BSNL and other companies provide a bundle of internet services including peripheral equipment on a subscription model. This model has become very popular in India because you don't need to pay the cap packs. g

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QUANTUM

MCX-SX and Mammon

setback for shah

EVERYONE knows how politically well-connected Jignesh Shah, Managing Director of MCX Stock Exchange (MCX-SX), is and he is also a celebrity in India's financial circles. So the rejection of MCX-SX's application to run stock exchanges offering trading in equity and derivatives by SEBI Chairman CB Bhave has come as a surprise to most.

The application was rejected on the grounds of protecting trade interests as well as public interests. The stock exchanges, considered the grass-roots regulators, cannot simply be handed over to the kind of people who lack transparency in functioning and repose faith in their financial and political muscle.

Shah is a confidant of Maratha leader Sharad Pawar and harbours a long-cherished dream – along with his political mentors – of making MCX-SX the biggest and richest stock exchange of the country. But Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee keeps a tab on how and where his party's detractors are making their moves in the financial world. As long as MCX-SX does not put on even a semblance of transparency, it is doubtful that Pranab*babu* will open the door for Shah to become the richest man in the country.

Mayawati in a cage

police keeps dalits away

IS there a threat to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati's life in her own State? Yes, if the UP police is to be believed. This police force unearthed a threat letter somewhere in the Kanpur-Allahabad region after a massive search operation lasting a month or two.

Promptly, an investigation was started, meetings were held and a new strategy to protect the Chief Minister was planned. The best the police could come up with was, let the Chief Minister not move out from her house. Now, she walks out the back of her house and enters a lift, which takes her straight to her office on the famous *pancham tal* (fifth floor) of the Secretariat.

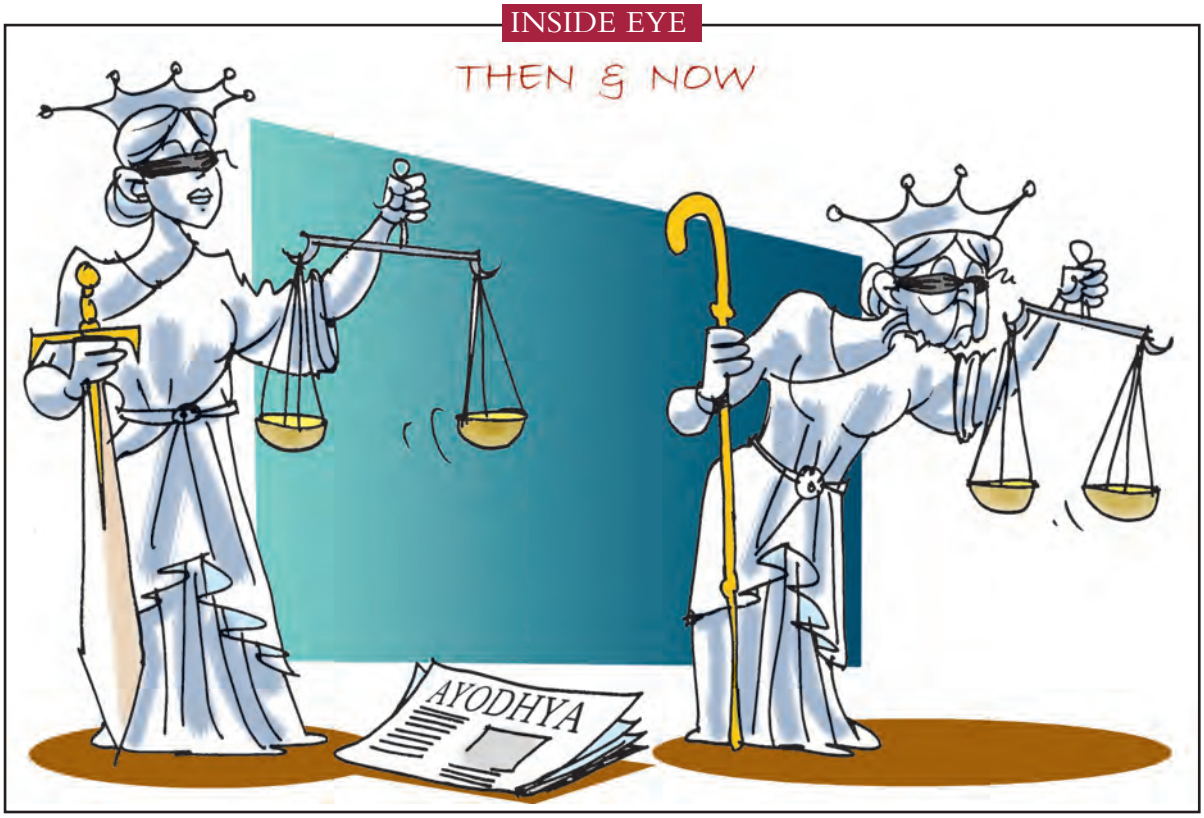
However, Mayawati is now surrounded only by babus. Dalit workers of the Bahujan Samaj Party are kept out of the charmed circle as they might pose a danger to her life.

No-show to Gadkari show

iftar do turns tables

THOUGH BJP chief Nitin Gadkari is keen to make inroads into the minority community, its representatives among the party leadership view this as a threat. The party has two influential leaders, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Shahnawaz Hussain, in its minority community panel but Gadkari, it seems, does not want to utilize them.

Gadkari organized an iftar party at the Ashoka Road party office in Delhi with the help of a media baron who is a surgeon and an RSS worker. On the day of the party, Hussain rsvped that he would not be able to attend. Naqvi was in the office when the party was on and was asked to partici-



ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

pate but pretended to be busy.

Insiders say the episode helped Gadkari prove he could manage the show without the help of stalwarts and sent a message to their pawns.

Chauhan's better half

sadhana governing mp

FOR all his placid composure in public, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan is turning out to be a smart strategist. He has strategically divided his work in the state. He deals effectively with political opponents like Kailash Vijayvargiya and has blocked Uma Bharti's efforts to make a comeback in State BJP politics. Of course, Nitin Gadkari's appointment as BJP boss came as a blessing in disguise for Chauhan.

The CM also tours a lot. So the real business of governance has been assigned to wife Sadhana Singh. In the corridors of the Secretariat, every Minister and babu knows where the file will go for final approval. So, whether it is mine projects, construction work, road repair, purchase of vehicles *et al*, Sadhana enquires, verifies, and, if need be, "holds" the files before giving the final nod. g

The ones

Brief sketches of the men and women w h

TKA Nair – Principal Secretary to PM

A 1963-batch Punjab cadre officer, Nair retired from the IAS 12 years ago. He was also Secretary to former Prime Minister IK Gujral and Atal Behari Vajpayee and served in the Planning Commission.

R Gopalakrishnan – Addl. Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (Personnel & General Admn)

A 1979-batch Madhya Pradesh cadre IAS officer, he has been for long the PMO's pointman for the social sector. He has been overseeing the Bharat Nirman programme and is Member-Secretary of the National Innovation Council set up by the PM recently. He functioned as Joint Secretary in the PMO since his appointment in June 2004. He was Congress leader Digvijay Singh's information adviser when the latter was Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister. He monitors social sector Ministries and the government's flagship schemes.

KM Chandrasekhar – Cabinet Secretary

A 1970-batch Kerala cadre officer, he earlier served as Revenue Secretary. A former ambassador and Permanent Representative of India in the World Trade Organization, he was the first IAS officer to be Director of Fisheries in Kerala. The PM has appointed Chandrasekhar head of a committee to monitor the Commonwealth Games with powers to override the Games' Organizing Committee.

Christy L Fernandez – Secretary to the President

Dr Fernandez (IAS, 1973 batch, Gujarat cadre) became Secretary to the President when Pratibha Patil took office in July 2007. Belonging to the Latin Catholic diocese of Quilon in Kerala, he was also Secretary to the Department of Tourism at the Centre. He has served as Joint Secretary in the Agriculture and Petroleum Ministries, Additional Secretary in the Commerce Ministry and Principal Secretary of the Gujarat Town Development Council.

Nirupama Menon Rao – Foreign Secretary

Nirupama Menon Rao, IFS, is the second woman to hold the post of Foreign Secretary. In 1973, she topped the civil services examination before joining the IFS. She was Minister of Press Affairs in Washington, Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow, and in the Ministry of External Affairs as Joint Secretary, East Asia, and External Publicity, making her the first woman spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry. She was also Chief of Personnel, and ambassador to Peru and China, and High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

Gopal Krishna Pillai – Home Secretary

The 1972-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre served as Special Secretary for Industries, as Secretary, Health, and as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala. He was also Joint Secretary in charge of the Northeast over 1996-2001.

S Sundareshan – Secretary, Petroleum & Natural Gas

A 1976-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, he was earlier Additional Secretary and Special Secretary in the Ministry. An MBA from University of Leeds, UK, he has held positions including Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance), Minister (Economic and Commercial), Embassy of India, Tokyo, and Joint Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (Ministry of Commerce).

M Madhavan Nambiar – Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation

A 1974-batch IAS officer from the Tamil Nadu cadre, he was earlier Special Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

Neela Gangadharan – Secretary, Dept of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice

A 1975-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, she has been Land Revenue Commissioner, Agriculture Production Commissioner, Excise Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary in charge

s who rule

w ho run India's institutions of governance

of Cooperation and Parliamentary Affairs. On Central deputation, she was Joint Secretary in the Agriculture and Cooperation Ministries. She was Minister of Agriculture in the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.

Rudra Gangadharan – Secretary, department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying

A 1975-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, he was formerly Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.

Raghu Menon – Secretary, Information and Broadcasting

A 1974-batch IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre, he earlier served in the Civil Aviation Ministry and Air India. He was also Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the I&B Ministry.

K Mohandas – Secretary, Shipping

A 1974-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, he was earlier Secretary in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. He has vast experience in the sectors of Finance, Industry and Commerce, Education, Urban Development and General Administration. He has been Special Secretary/Additional Secretary in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance and was Principal Secretary in Kerala.

Sudha Pillai – Secretary, Planning Commission

A 1972-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, she was earlier Union Labour Secretary. She stood second in the IAS examination and was originally allotted to the Punjab cadre. She has served as DC of Thiruvananthapuram, Chairman and Managing Director of the Kerala Finance Corporation, and Principal Secretary, Finance. She served in the Ministries of Industry and Corporate Affairs, Panchayati Raj, and Mines. She is married to GK Pillai.

Shiv Shankar Menon – National Security Adviser

A 1972-batch Indian Foreign Service officer who has served in China, Israel, Austria, Japan and Sri Lanka, and was an adviser in the Department of Atomic Energy, he retired in July 2009. As Foreign Secretary, he backed India's successful bid to join the civil nuclear commerce mainstream.

Vinod Rai – Comptroller & Auditor General of India

A 1972-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, he was earlier Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, and responsible for managing the Financial Services sector, including banks and insurance companies. He has also been Principal Secretary, Finance, in the Kerala government apart from holding senior positions in the Union Ministries of Commerce and Defence.

KG Balakrishnan – Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission

He is the sixth Chairperson of the NHRC. He was appointed a judge of the Kerala High Court in 1985. He became Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court in 1998 and was transferred to the High Court of Judicature at Madras. He assumed charge there as Chief Justice in 1999. He was elevated as Supreme Court Judge in 2000. In 2007, he was appointed Chief Justice of India and retired on May 12, 2010.

PJ Thomas – Central Vigilance Commissioner

A 1973-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre, he is India's 14th CVC. He is a former Chief Secretary of Kerala and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary. As Telecom Secretary, he was instrumental in holding the 3G auctions that brought IN Rs67,000 crore.

Dr S Ayyappan – Secretary, Agriculture Research

He obtained BFSc and MFSc degrees from the College of Fisheries, Mangalore, and a PhD from Bangalore University. He headed CIFA and CIFE before becoming Deputy Director General of Fisheries in ICAR in 2002. g

by **Diptendra Raychaudhuri**

Will the Reds gain if the Congress and Mamata Banerjee part ways?

Left in

THE Left is surely seeing red now. Its leaders in West Bengal perpetuated the myth that the defeat in the State was due to the alliance between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TC) of Mamata Banerjee. It is another matter that a similar tie-up in the 2001 Assembly elections brought the Congress-TC combine less than one-third seats. But now the Kolkata municipal poll results have exposed how cut off the Left leaders in West Bengal are from the political reality.

So what will happen in West Bengal next May when, most likely, a new government will be formed after the Assembly elections? One thing is easily predictable. It will not be a Left government. This prediction is not based on the municipal poll results as its electorate consisted of only 16 per cent of the total number of Assembly voters. It is based on the swing of the popular mood from the 2008 panchayat election onwards. Now, certain things have become evident:

One, the Left is consistently losing its vote. From slightly over 50 per cent in 2006, in four years it has reduced to below 40 per cent. This is the lowest since 1977, surpassing the previous most-dismal performance in 1984 when, after Indira Gandhi's assassination, the Left secured about 46 per cent.

Two, the geographical area of domination of the Congress-TC is clearly demarcated. TC dominates 150-160 seats (mostly in South Bengal), the Congress dominates 60-70 seats (mainly in North-Central Bengal), and both parties have the capability to cut into each other in the remaining 65-75 seats (mostly in districts like West Midnapore, Purulia, Bankura and Coochbehar which are still dominated, though to a much lesser extent, by the Left).

Three, in case there is no alliance between the Congress and TC, the geographical demarcation will be more strongly evident before the Assembly elections. The public as well as political workers and leaders will definitely veer to the locally dominant opposition party. After all, the opposition is all set to come to power after three-and-a-half decades.

No one can vouch for either state Congress supremo Manas Bhunia or the TC chief caring to retain the alliance in the Assembly poll. While Mamata incorporates much too strong anti-CPM fervour, Bhunia is similar to any Congress leader in the State who does not mind taking or extending support when it comes to the Left.

But what will happen if the Congress and TC come together? Or, if they are not together? Until now, considering the three sides in the contest, the TC enjoys supremacy in approximately 120-125 seats, the Left in about 100 seats and the Congress in 35-40 seats. The rest of the 294 seats are either hanging in the balance or dominated by smaller parties. One can build different scenarios keeping in mind the vote percentage of the parties and geographical imbalances in support base. g

Scenario I (Possibility: 80%)
TC and Congress get 2/3 majority

Despite the CPI(M)'s effort to create a rift between the Congress and TC, both parties are likely to fight the Assembly election together. If it happens, the opposition unity will cause further erosion in Left votes.

The alliance is likely to get 200+ seats in the 294-member Assembly. The TC may get about 150-160 and the Congress about 40-50. However, if we take into account the gain the opposition has made after the 2009 polls, it may go beyond 250. The government will last a full five years.

Scenario II (Possibility: 10%)
Mamata as CM with a simple majority

If the alliance breaks, there are two possibilities. One, Mamata and her allies get a simple majority—say, about 150 seats. This happens if the TC retains its popularity level from the 2009 polls.

Then Mamata will be CM for five years. Congress will not dare to vote against this government as that will attract the stigma of helping the CPI(M). That will doom the future prospects of the national party and will wash away whatever it has retained till now. But Mamata will not be in an unenviable position.

Sonia and Mamata: chugging along on the anti-communist bandwagon

the lurch

Scenario III (Possibility: 7.5%)
Mamata as CM without majority for TC

In case of a very sour break-up of the alliance, the TC may miss the magic mark by a few seats and then will have to depend on Congress support again post-election.

Mamata will be CM but it will be an unstable government and another election will ensue soon.

However, it may so happen that a large chunk of the newly elected legislators of the Congress comes out of the party to join Mamata. In that case Mamata will have no difficulty run ning the government for a full five years.

Scenario IV (Possibility: 2.5%)
Congress heads a minority government

This happens if, in case of a sour break-up, the Congress does not back Mamata. The Left will be happy to extend support to a minority Congress government (with maybe 15 per cent of MLAs).

The survival of such a government will depend on the overall political environment in the country.

It is clear that if the Congress and TC split, there is no guarantee that the Left will gain significantly. There is only a 2.5 per cent chance of the Left gaining.

by **Col R Hariharan**

The political leadership is seized of a marked s

Looking for alibis, not action

I am no great admirer of Henry Kissinger. But his pithy remark, "America needs a strategy, not an alibi", in a recent article on the US operations in Afghanistan sums up the situation. If you substitute India for America it would aptly describe the desperate straits of New Delhi in handling our own internal situation across the country, whether it is Kashmir or the Maoist and Northeastern extremists.

Kashmir is in an undeclared "intifada" with the disgruntled youth indulging in "stone warfare" against the police and paramilitary forces. It does not require the World Cup Nostradamus – octopus Paul – to guess the hidden hand of jihadists in whipping up emotions there. They have now done more damage to upset the state apparatus than the terrorists ever achieved. Both the ruling and opposition political parties are dithering. And Srinagar and New Delhi appear to favour the firefighting measure of deploying the Army rather than taking concrete action to put out the fire.

The Home Minister's much publicized "war" against Maoists appears to be going awry. The grim scorecard of the police and paramilitary losing lives at the hands of Maoists is going up. They continue to flout elementary rules of insurgency warfare despite the Home Ministry spouting data about their special training. The Ministry tried to get the Army into action though Armymen come from a similar background as the Central police troops. Veteran cop EN Rammohan, who investigated the Dantewada incident, calls the CRPF a "lathi force". If that is so, why offer them as sacrificial goats?

New Delhi still appears to be confused as it gropes for a common strategy. At the Chief Ministers' meeting on July 14 in New Delhi, dissonant voices of some of the worst-affected States showed the Home Minister's problem is far from over. Four worst-hit states – Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal and Jharkhand – agreed to form unified commands for anti-Naxal operations modelled after those existing in Jammu and Kashmir, and Assam.

In spite of the Maoists fighting the state in over 170 districts, the government recently objected to a UN report calling it an "armed conflict" though the Home Minister has called it a "war". The report, produced by the office of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and submitted to the Security Council, had highlighted the recruitment and use of children by the Maoist armed group in some districts of Chhattisgarh.

The core issue is, do we want to fight the Maoists or not? Or do we want to carry party politics down to the State level and carry on a slanging match on television? If not, why is there lack of professionalism in all avenues from planning to action? Clearly, there is something seriously wrong in the handling of the issue and nobody knows who is responsible.

It seems the somnolence in managing the internal situation is everywhere. Take the case of the Manipur blockade. Over two million people of the State were held to ransom for two months when the All Naga Student Association of Manipur (ANSAM) established road blocks at entry points into the State. The blockade was "suspended temporarily" at the "request" of the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister. Of course, the media, quoting government sources, reported that Central paramilitary forces "lifted" the blockade.

The ANSAM blockade was ostensibly against the ban on the visit of Th Muivah, the leader of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim – Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) to his hometown of Somdal in Manipur. But, as the Manipur government has pointed out, the real reason was the NSCN-IM's opposition to the holding of autonomous district council elections in Manipur.

This is a direct consequence of New Delhi's inability to reconcile Muivah's demand for Naga sovereignty and

somnolence in tackling difficult situations across the country

PIB

Muivah (left) and Chidambaram: 56 rounds of talks in 13 years!

Not only internal security, but governance as a whole appears to be in slow motion.

"greater Nagalim" with the conflicting interests of neighbouring states. This is after New Delhi's 56 rounds of talks for the past 13 years with Muivah! The only gainer seems to be Muivah, who is calling the shots. He has established his armed followers in the heart of Nagaland in "peace camps". They have become fat cats thriving on extortion. With this kind of governance, how can Manipuris feel they are part of this country when the state cannot ensure their right to normal life?

Not only internal security, but governance as a whole appears to be in slow motion. For instance, government inaction for political reasons has empowered *khap panchayats* to pass the death sentence! But the worst example is the Bhopal tragedy. Twentysix years after the disaster, a GoM deliberates on the issue for a few hours and discovers that it needs to prosecute Anderson, the then CEO of Union Carbide in the US.

IT would be charitable to describe the decision-making process as lethargic; it is best described as poodlefaking. The public is equally guilty in allowing the government to get away with it time and again. It is time we started meaning what we say and do what we mean.

The US has not covered itself with glory in the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists. It has poured in money – over $80 billion – and its Army continues to suffer casualties. All it has to show there now is a democratically elected government steeped in corruption, controlling barely 21 per cent of the country. But, even in the midst of all this adversity, in the US there is a sense of urgency of thought and action. The people held President George W Bush responsible for the failure and elected a Democrat as President. There is free airing of opinions and fixing of responsibility. President Barack Obama continues to monitor performance of his generals. He does not hesitate to sack General McChrystal, the chief executive of operations, and appoint General Petraeus in his place. So, though Kissinger may suggest strategy rather than alibi, at least the US government shows it is alive to the situation.

Though American operations in Afghanistan are not worth emulating, the Indian government can take a cue from them on maintaining clear focus on the core issue. And that is what we are not doing. We are only looking for alibis and not action. There is not even knee-jerk reaction anymore, only paralytic spasm. At best we can hope for another Group of Ministers to sit, discuss and debate this issue. If that happens we will be where we started. g

Probes to now

Agencies investigating criminal charges against the influ e accountable to an independent authority

by **NL Rajah**

ARUNA

What happens at the State level to ensure accountability in investigation? As things stand, there is no accountability to any independent authority as regards investigations by the State police.

WHENEVER there is a piece of "breaking news" of a scandal relating to criminal acts by the powerful or influential, an all-too-familiar pantomime unfolds. In the beginning the news is broken; this is followed either by a stock denial or stoic silence by the person concerned; the political opposition or public interest groups then clamour for an investigation; a CBI probe or a police inquiry is ordered; then the powers that be sanctimoniously intone that the law will take its own course; silence follows while the investigation is on; a chargesheet is filed; finally, aeons later, when the incident has been given a proper burial in public memory, we hear that the concerned person has been acquitted.

This state of affairs exists because there is a serious hiatus in our criminal justice dispensing system.

An investigation begins with filing of a First Information Report. The proceedings during the course of investigation take place in a dark tunnel. No external agency or authority other than the concerned investigating team and the concerned Ministry can have access to any information relating to the investigation. Even the Right to Information Act is incapable of unearthing information regarding what is happening during the investigation. The chargesheet, when finally filed, is open to public scrutiny.

Since it is ordained by law, the judiciary has been protective of this procedure. In Union of India vs Prakash P Hinduja (AIR 2003 SC 2612), the Supreme Court held that the manner and method of investigation should be left to the discretion of the police and even the magistrate cannot interfere. This position in law is exploited to the hilt when an investigation concerns those in power or the influential. Even a minor but crucial discrepancy in recording the results of an investigation or the manner of conduct of an investigation (which occurs, quite often, intentionally) becomes a *brahmastra* in the hands of a competent lawyer to make mincemeat of the case. The accused sings his way home. In short, there is no accountability to any independent authority during this crucial phase of prosecution.

The US recognized this vital flaw in the criminal justice system quite early. In 1978, in response to the outcry that followed the Watergate scandal and the Saturday Night Massacre, Congress drafted the Ethics in Government Act or the Independent Counsel Act. The Act provided for the creation of the office of a Special Prosecutor, which later came to be known as the office of the Independent Counsel. This office would be used by the legislature or the Attorney General (either *suo motu* or on a request from the investigating agency) to investigate individuals holding or formerly holding certain high positions in the federal government and in the national election campaign organization. The investigating agency, when it feared interference by the high and

here

lu ential should be

mighty, could ask for the probe and prosecution to be done under the watchful eyes of the Independent Counsel so that there would be no executive interference. The Constitutionality of this office was upheld by the US Supreme Court in Morrison vs Olson. The office has been put to good use to investigate charges of alleged use of drugs by Jimmy Carter aide Hamilton Jordan (1978), the Iran contra affair (1986-93), corruption charges against Mike Espy (1994-2001), the suicide of Vince Foster who was involved in the Whitewater scandal (1994-2001) and, most famously, the Monica Lewinsky scandal (1994-2001). The Independent Counsel supervises the investigation and, more important, insulates it from executive and other influence.

IN India, recognizing a similar flaw in the criminal justice dispensation system, the Supreme Court, in the celebrated case of Vineet Narain vs Union of India, conferred powers of supervising investigation of sensitive cases involving public servants on the Central Vigilance Commission. Several directions were passed by the Supreme Court to insulate this authority from political interference. These directions finally (though not with the same vigour, but that is another story) assumed the status of legislation with the passing of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. The impact of this reform has been restricted, since the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has jurisdiction to investigate a very limited category of cases, ie corruption by public servants of Central government departments, Central Public Sector Undertakings, economic crimes, terrorism, and the like. A large number of cases continue to be investigated by the State police. So what happens at the State level to ensure accountability in investigation? As things stand, there is no accountability to any independent authority as regards investigations by the State police.

However, the Soli Sorabjee Committee which drafted the Model Police Act, 2005, has done commendable work in borrowing from the idea of the CVC and developing an authority called the Police Accountability Commission at the State level and Police Accountability Authority at the district level. The model Act (Sections 158 to 179) contemplates the establishment of an Independent Police Accountability Commission at the State level and in each district.

The model Act draws from the concept of an Independent Counsel and the Central Vigilance Commission when it mandates, in Section 167 (2): "The Commission may also inquire into any other case referred to it by the Director General of Police if, in the opinion of the Commission, the nature of the case merits an independent inquiry."

The attempt here is not to curtail or interfere with the powers of investigation of the police but to ensure accountability to an independent authority rather than just the powers that be. The Commission is to consist of five members, ie, a retired High Court judge, a retired police officer from another State cadre, a person with a minimum of 10 years' experience as a judicial officer, public prosecutor, practising advocate or a professor of law, a person of repute and standing from civil society, and a retired public administration officer from another State, provided that at least one member of the commission shall be a woman and not more than one member shall be a retired police officer. The Commission effectively provides a window to the dark tunnel of investigation, through the office of the Police Accountability Authority.

Pursuant to the Supreme Court directions in the Prakash Singh case, many State governments have enacted a new police Act. However, virtually no State has provided for establishment of a Police Accountability Commission.

The existing procedures have nothing to commend their acceptability other than their antiquity. Only public pressure can salvage the situation. g

The writer is a senior advocate of Madras High Court.

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'Dr Bhabha's vision would have solved India's energy shortage'

Anil Kakodkar is an eminent Indian nuclear scientist and mechanical engineer. He was the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Atomic Energy. Before leading India's nuclear programme, he was the Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, from 1996-2000. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian honour, on January 26, 2009.

interviewed by DINESH LAKHANPAL

gfiles: *On having been chairman of the Department of Atomic Energy....*

Anil Kakodkar: Actually, in the Department of Atomic Energy we are all Team DAE and I think all of us are kind of wedded to a common mission.

gfiles: *Any motivations to join the then Atomic Energy Establishment?*

AK: I passed out from VJTI as a mechanical engineer in 1963 and joined the Atomic Energy Establishment in 1964. In those days mechanical engineers were in great demand. All of us had appointment letters from very important companies, even without having to appear for an interview. I had a full file of appointment letters, but the industry scene at that time was not very exciting for me whereas in the Atomic Energy Establishment in Trombay it was clear that one would be in a position to do several new things.

gfiles: *What was your first interaction with Dr Homi J Bhabha like?*

AK: The atomic energy programme was quite small in those days. I was already in the seventh batch and the batch was quite big, maybe around a hundred people. We all somehow felt that we were too many compared to the size of the programme, so once we asked him about that. He said, "Why are you worried?" We said that we just wanted to know whether this programme would be large enough to provide interesting activities for all of us. Somebody asked, "Aren't you spending too much for a kind of undefined activity?" He said, "You don't worry about all that. You do your R&D, your research, whatever and even after 10, 15, 20 or 30 batches, if one or two of you turn out to be Nobel laureates, all of my money would have been returned."

gfiles: *What were your priorities when you took over as Chairman, DAE?*

AK: The three-stage programme chalked out by Bhabha was well on track and I think that is still valid today. I had been working on nuclear power, so I had my own insights into what needed to be done further. Over time, there were some drifts but I straightaway started off with a sort of re-calibration in terms of where the programme was and what was needed to move on. There are a few DAE publications charting what we need to do in the area of nuclear power, in development of technologies required for nuclear power and then we got into collective mode to move forward and it's going on since.

gfiles: *What caused drift?*

AK: I think it had happened without people being conscious of it. It happened because the rest of the country itself is like that. Bhabha created something which was different from the rest of the country and maybe as we went along it was not emphasized enough...so we were sort of getting aligned with what had happened in the rest of the country.

gfiles: *What could be the factors?*

AK: As the system becomes bigger you have to also be conscious about your peer group and see what is happening in the rest of the country, whether you are on a par or lagging or leading. That is also true in development. For example, if you are constructing a nuclear power project, there will be comparisons. You are spending so much money, you are producing electricity at such and such rate, somebody is producing a thermal power station at a much cheaper rate – so you get driven by those kinds of

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Kakodkar receives the Padma Vibhushan from President Patil: lifetime achievement

'The consumer is always going to have a short-term focus. He will say, while buying something, "Am I getting the best?" '

comparisons and you want to win the competition which is important because without that you don't progress.

We want to be the best in the world. We cannot be unless such segments are interconnected.

gfiles: *Would you blame market forces, consumerism?*

AK: Well, yes and no. The consumer is always going to have a short-term focus. He will say, while buying something, "Am I getting the best?" There was a time when Indian households were full of Indian products, refrigerators or kitchen appliances and so on.

And then we went into this liberalized system and I think many of those products have vanished. There could be many reasons. But the fact is that in technological terms the Indian products did not compete. Because they were based on technology transfer. Somebody got into a technology transfer arrangement with somebody else abroad and started making those products. Now when there is liberalization or an open market, people who have better technologies are not going to give them to you. They will straightaway market it here. So the better technologies came in and so-called Indian brands got wiped out.

By copying technology, you can at best be a good second. You can never be first. Bhabha had understood this, that is why he emphasized a particular culture. And it is important that we get back those elements. It will be good for us in the long run.

gfiles: *Can you throw some light on what Dr Bhabha visualized 65 years ago and where we stand today?*

AK: I think this has been a continuous process. There are several people who have contributed to carrying it forward. For example, the pressurized heavy water reactor technology. Today, our PHWRs perform with global standards. Some of our reactors have been judged the best in the world. They have won global awards. Some of our people who operate the reactors have won global awards. That has happened because this is a road to excellence but it is sustained work. While this has happened, we have also gone through rough weather. Our reactors had a lot of technological problems. Operational excellence had to be achieved.

The same thing is true of the fast reactors. We are able to have them today because the Indira Gandhi Centre worked on it for 25 years. The Centre was set up in Sarabhai's time. There was this emphasis on this 500 megawatt reactor, getting into massive development, that came in during Ramanna's time. Compared to the time-frame in his mind, there has been a delay although we are very proud to have mastered those technologies. We have shown global excellence in those technologies but things have got delayed. But the energy requirements today are far more acute compared to what they were earlier or even what we would have visualized for today 10 or 15 years ago. So there is a much greater level of urgency today.

The starting base is by external inputs and because we have developed this technology on our own, it will be very easy for us to assimilate whatever comes from outside. It will also be very easy for us to build up a multiplier. After all, in a three-stage programme,

there is a multiplier. There is one 10,000 megawatt PHWR that can become a 500,000 MW fast reactor without any additional uranium being required.

gfiles: *How is the nuclear treaty going to help the weakest in our society?*

AK: If the three-stage nuclear programme had gone on at the rate at which Bhabha had visualized it, then the energy shortage we see today would have been bridged because the multiplier would already have been in force. In 40 or 50 years from now, we will see much higher shortages. Even if we use every bit of energy resource that you can have from within the country and are able to exploit it to the fullest potential in the quickest possible time, we will still be left with a huge energy deficit by 2050.

'If the three-stage nuclear programme had gone on at the rate Bhabha visualized, the energy shortage we see would have been bridged.'

gfiles: *We might have to import?*

AK: Of course. To meet that shortage, you will have to import energy. In terms of coal, we will have to import 1.6 billion tons annually. It will choke all our ports, railway lines, everything. It is not possible. First of all, where will you get that kind of money? Even if you say it is an economic activity, the country will find the money, it is very difficult to provide matching infrastructure. On the other hand, we can get a certain quantity of uranium, set up some additional thermal reactors, allow multiplication through fast reactors. Again, we should work with the same vision as Bhabha, we should be able to realize all this in the kind of time-frame he visualized. See, we were dependent for food at one stage. Thanks to the Green Revolution, food security is there. Similarly, this will make India energy independent. And we are doing this without changing one bit our autonomy regarding R&D.

gfiles: *The architect of the Green Revolution, Prof MS Swaminathan, has been advocating a renewed approach – from Green to Evergreen Revolution. Does the energy cycle also need the same approach?*

AK: It is like that. We often use the term "energy security". It means, even in troubled times the country should be able to provide for its energy requirements for a reasonable period. Energy independence is that you no longer have to worry about energy coming from anywhere. Perpetual energy security, that is what I mean.

gfiles: *The number of young men and women opting for science as a career has come down and the country has failed to attract the best talent.*

AK: We need scientists who can engineer India and you need engineers who understand this new science which is not taught in engineering colleges. This is also a major challenge for our education system. As for the atomic energy programme, it is very important that a student, while he or she is going through the education programme, gets a holistic experience.

Students should be able to build their own experimental set-ups. They must know how much activity goes into a workshop so that they understand what it means in terms of making that set-up. On a larger scale, they should be able to understand the science and the technology behind it and, if it comes to that, they should be able to engineer it themselves. There is a third component in education. Students must be exposed to the problems of this country. When students are oblivious of the problems of their own country or society, there remains a big gap in their education.

gfiles: *Can the recent bubble burst of the IT industry and the recession be used to fill the gaps you spoke of?*

AK: Probably, but we need to be more proactive than that. We should be able to create an ambience where a student is learning and in a neighbouring room a Nobel laureate is carrying out some research and on the other side is a room where some technology is being developed which the whole world is vying for. On the third side, there is some great rural extension programme going on. It enriches the whole ambience if all of it is done together.

The problem is, you must maintain excellence in all. A little dilution of excellence is a disaster we can't allow. It is eminently possible to do this while maintaining excellence in each area. In the DAE, we have managed to do so to quite an extent. g

gfiles

INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

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PERHAPS one of the most important Bills to be tabled in Parliament after Cabinet approval in August is the proposed law seeking to protect whistleblowers from official retaliation. After the RTI (Right to Information) legislation, this Bill, if passed in the right spirit and without any emasculation, will be equal in import. It will be another vital blow in support of good governance and Best Government practices.

In summa ....Read More

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The persecution of a man who committed the truth

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How is the steel frame holding up?

India's maiden Civil Services Survey has opened up a new avenue for administrative reforms, with the Centre attempting to put its finger on the pulse of members of three All-India Services and [illegible] Central services

by NARESH MINOCHA

THE feedback is certainly pulsating. As many as 85 per cent of respondents take pride in being civil servants; 81 per cent believe t ....Read More

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How the world views them, how they view themselves

In dismantling archaic percepts and constructs lies the challenge and opportunity for IAS reformers

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civil services | opinion

The Augean Stables

Now is the time for Manmohan Singh to radically transform the civil services and prove his critics wrong

by RAHUL SINGH

SINCE becoming an adult, I have interacted extensively with civil servants. In the milieu that I grew up in, they were considered the el[illegible] of the country. Two of my parents' closest friends were distinguish[illegible] civil servants. Prem Kirpal and EN Mangatrai. The first beca[illegible] Education Secre ....Read More

GOVERNANCE

[illegible]

Expropriate the corporators!

Outsourcing municipal functions will bypass the corrupt corporator and improve civic governance

by MAJOR GENERAL MRINAL SUMAN

MY mother is 88 years old, perfectly alert and, having been born and brought up in Lahore, always reminisces about 'the good old days'. Recently, after watching a TV news round-up on a [illegible] Ladakh [illegible] passing day, she made an extraordinary [illegible] ....[illegible] failed miserably ....Read More

STOCK DOCTOR

GS Sood

Be selective, jettison dud stocks

THE markets have more than doubled in the past 15 months and are staying at a high whereas a majority of investors are hoping for a correction. However, as big bull Rakesh Jhunjhunwala said, the correction never happens when it is expected most or when a majority of the investors (....Read More

Pranab treads warily

minister eyes top post

PRANAB Mukherjee is displaying extreme caution. It seems he does not want to give any leverage to anybody that might jeopardize his final chance to make it to prime ministership. So he is, more or less, following in the footsteps of Manmohan Singh. No 'hush-hu ....Read More

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dcp (central), delhi | jaspal singh

'Community alertness is very im

A 1996-batch IPS officer of the AGMUT cadre, DCP Jaspal Singh heads the law and order machinery of Central District – one of the most important and communally sensitive districts of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. In the first part of a gfiles *focus on the law-enforcers of Delhi, he details security measures and community participation initiatives and emphasizes the importance of public cooperation in maintaining law and order. He was earlier DCP, North East District of Delhi. Posted as SP, Nicobar, three days after the tsunami struck in 2004, Jaspal Singh was commended by the Lt Governor, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, for his contribution to the rescue and rehabilitation effort.*

interviewed by KALLOL DEY

gfiles: *How difficult is the task of the DCP, Central District, of the National Capital Region?*

Jaspal Singh: Law and order is in control but we can't be lax for even a moment. The job demands constant vigilance and judicious mobilization of personnel. One of the main engagements of the Central District Police force is escorting VVIPs and VIPs, especially with round-the-year visits to the Gandhi Samadhi. The district has major religious monuments like the Jama Masjid and the Laxmi Narayan temple. As it has a mixed population, every religious festival is celebrated in a big way. Ensuring security during the celebrations is one of the biggest challenges. Then we have Chauri Bazaar and Ajauri, the two major transit areas for people passing through Delhi, which need constant monitoring. Central District also has the most number of guesthouses and hotels which have to be checked regularly.

gfiles: *What is the mechanism to monitor the transit population, especially with mushrooming of hotels and guesthouses?*

JS: It is impossible to monitor the transit population completely. Both the railway stations – Old and New Delhi – are located in this district. It has been made legally mandatory for hotels and guesthouses to photograph customers, maintain proper records and instal CCTV cameras. The police regularly cross-checks the records.

gfiles: *How are the markets monitored?*

JS: I ensure a beat system. However, public initiatives like installation of CCTV are making our task easier. The business communities of Gafar Market and Paharganj Market have already installed CCTV and it is being done in the Karol Bagh Market. ECIL is installing CCTV for Delhi Police. The cooperation of the Resident Welfare Associations and Market Associations helps us ensure vigilance.

gfiles: *With a flourishing business community in the district, there must be many cases of extortion....*

JS: No. Contrary to this perception, there are very few cases of extortion and we have ensured that there are no professional extortion gangs.

gfiles: *What are the most frequent crimes in Central District?*

JS: Two kinds of crime are common. One is vehicle theft. Patel Nagar, DBG Road and Ranjit Nagar are primarily affected. We have brought down the rate of vehicle thefts but cars kept in unsecured areas and the proximity of the Delhi border make things difficult for us. And, while people are ready to spend huge amounts on buying cars, they are stingy when it comes to installing high-end gadgets which would discourage thefts. The other common crime is robbery. Rajinder Nagar is most affected.

gfiles: *Central District is dotted with mosques, gurudwaras and temples. Is the police adequately prepared for crowd control and to check incidents which could spark communal tension?*

JS: We have crowd control equipment and special lights. CCTV cameras are installed during any big gathering like Ramlila. The Quick Reaction Team is always at hand to douse any volatile situation. The police also gets assistance from Nagarik Suraksha Samitis [Citizens' Protection Committees] who work zealously during every religious festival. Eid, Holi or Diwali – every religious festival is celebrated with gusto. Two extra companies are deployed every Friday during *namaaz* prayers at the Jama Masjid. There are hardly any incidents. I have always believed that with a little effort it is possible to maintain communal harmony. People basically want to live in peace. There isn't much communal tension between the religious communities, it is the troublemakers who intentionally try to disturb peace.

gfiles: *Is there any threat perception or frequent incidence of crime in the area around the Jama Masjid?*

JS: In Delhi, incidence of crime is the least in the Jama Masjid area. A majori-

'The Quick Reaction Team is always at hand to douse any volatile situation. The police also gets assistance from Nagarik Suraksha Samitis.'

n portant in tackling terrorism'

RAJEEV DABRAL

ty of the population has been resident there for very long and the *mohallah* culture still exists. There is no precedence of terrorists being sheltered in the area. Moreover, I have faith in the minorities. [Jaspal Singh spoke before the shooting of Taiwanese journalists.]

gfiles: *What measures have you taken to face the terrorism threat?*

JS: Terrorism continues to be the biggest challenge in the whole of the country. But other agencies are working on it too. We conduct regular patrolling, tenant verification, and sensitization drives with property dealers, motor mechanics and second-hand car dealers, cyber cafes and PCOs, guesthouse and hotel owners. And they coordinate with us by informing us about anything unusual. I have been stressing community policing initiatives and the involvement of stakeholders like businessmen. The Eyes & Ears scheme of Delhi Police, in which the common man on the road acts as the eyes and ears of the police, is paying dividends. Many cases have been solved and people rewarded for their assistance. The success of the scheme in the past two years has prompted the MHA to suggest other States implement it too.

The participation and alertness of the community is very important in tackling the terrorism threat. Stakeholders need to share the responsibility and the people have to share information with the public authority if they want to be safe. The community involvement in Central District is encouraging. It is helping us a lot. We also get *rehriwallahs*, chowkidars, *patriwallahs*, guards, landlords and members of Residents Welfare Associations and Market Associations involved through regular interaction. g

Thoughts on NREGA,

September 28, 2010

Respected Prime Minister,

In a landmark ruling from the viewpoint of the poor, the Supreme Court has directed that surplus food grains without proper storage facility should be distributed among the poor rather than be allowed to rot. The Government of India is reportedly unwilling to abide by the ruling, maybe because the Bill of Right to Food includes provision only for cheap grain, not free grain. There is a provision in the Natural Calamities Code for distribution of gratuitous relief, including free cooked food or grain. The fear is, what is conceded now will be demanded in future. The question is whether distress is limited to times of natural calamities or also exists due to acute poverty, prolonged unemployment or disease in normal times which cannot be taken care of by NREGA in the best of times, though the best of times seldom occur and the scheme is defeated and wages stolen by the implementing bureaucratic machine. Also, the scheme has a life of only six months. The answer, from a great many of us, is no, and we have the Supreme Court on our side. The Government of India should not be unnerved by numbers. The Supreme Court ruling does not cover the entire population of the poor. There is a natural calamity in some part of the country or the other, which hits the poor the most. Free distribution for the poor can be tied to these areas.

Some of us will even contest this limited view which delinks free grain from poverty and links it with natural calamity alone. If free grain is not a desirable option, we have to give the poor the means to buy grain cheaply. The government should open a postal account for every BPL family and deposit Rs 500 a month. This will cover the most vulnerable, the old, women and children. NREGA leaves out this section because they cannot undergo the rigours of work dealing with earth. The Rs 100 a day wage is meagre and a sure way to keep the poor poor in terms of calories consumed. A Rs 500 allowance will still be meagre but it will be some proof that we care for the poor beyond paying them wages for hard work.

Poor members of the community are also public servants since they contribute to the country's productive wealth but we reserve our regard for only a section of public servants formally appointed by the government. The distinction is purely artificial and arbitrary. The sooner we expand the boundary of public servants for affording basic amenities the better.

The top-most lawmakers have drawn a road map for law enforcement with a heart. Laws and policies should mirror and codify our inclusive and generous impulses. I have often grieved over the absence of a mechanism to transmit to the poor a share of the nation's growing prosperity but for expansion of the service sector at fairly inelastic wages and a small rise in employment, nowhere comparable to the rise in profits and executive I salaries or even the salaries that the people's representatives accord to themselves.

The right to food of the vulnerable sections of the poor would be one such mechanism, part of Bharat Nirman in human resources. Without it we may win the economic battle but lose the political. Another effective mechanism would be to make it mandatory for business undertakings to allow a share of equity to panchayat members in the area where the industry is located besides payment of compensation at market rates to the victims of land acquisition, jobs, as far as possible, and apprentice training so that the rural areas perceive a change in both their physical and mental landscape and are more welcoming of industry.

I am conscious that there is a growing awareness among our rural folk of industrialization being the only ticket out

Naxals and Kashmir

REUTERS

of the trap of poverty for some, if not all, of them. That is why they vote for parties that support and promote industrialization. Even land reforms, though desirable to create an ambience of equity, cannot end poverty and can at best create full employment with poverty. So growth must go on but with as many concessions to equity in distribution as we can think of. Our most serious human and political problem is poverty, more than growing rich or strong. The latter will be welcomed to the extent the former is eased.

NREGA should be additive to survival money of a bare allowance of Rs 500 for the vulnerable sections. It should include not just earth work but training in the semi-skilled work of electricians, plumbers and computer maintenance engineers which will have a growing market. Besides, it should, to honour the Father of the Nation, include khadi, weaving and selected cottage industries to guarantee minimum wages to skilled workers hit by industrialization.

Let me touch on Naxalism which has grown out of poverty and endeared itself to a section of the poor. We should try to negotiate a deal on rural problems and involve them in a sort of land army, a Lohia vision, or a vigilance committee. Killings, selective or indiscriminate, will not kill the movement. Nor will the government's misuse of authority to snuff out proactive support for tribal and environmental policies that impede development by dubbing them pro-Naxalite. It will only get worse.

Finally, we have to learn to live with difficult and troublesome neighbours, driven by oversized ambitions. But we can only be patient and not overreact till we have earned their respect by our own growth and put a cost tag on unfriendliness difficult to bear.

Kashmiris are not our neighbours, they are our own people. We should heed them as we heed others. We may be tough for a while but not indefinitely. We should appoint an impartial commission of inquiry under someone like Rajendra Sachar or Kuldip Nayyar to look into specific allegations. We should not panic and courageously reduce the security forces' presence. We should invoke help from one of the dissident leaders like Yasin Malik or Shabir Shah by offers of power-sharing besides using informed negotiators to carry on behind-the-scenes talks with both Kashmiris and Pakistan. If Pakistan does not respond, we should put on the table Nehru's own solution to the problem before he died, as recorded by Sheikh Abdullah in *Chinar in Flames,* which he personally took to Ayub Khan.

I write this long letter out of respect for your humanitarian qualities.

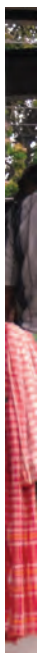
Best regards,

Shankar Sharan

IAS (Retd), 1955, Bihar cadre

Convener, Lok Paksh, Patna/ New Delhi

A citizens' petition from Punjab,



To

Her Excellency, The President,
Republic of India,
Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

His Excellency, The Vice-President,
Republic of India,
New Delhi

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,
North Block, New Delhi

Hon'ble Speaker,
Lok Sabha, New Delhi

Hon'ble Chief Justice of India,
New Delhi

Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner,
New Delhi

Subject: Need and request for Electoral Reforms to enable Indian democracy to survive the onslaught of criminals and corrupt politicians

Most respectfully and with high hopes, we, the voter-citizens of India, whose signatures are appended herewith (eleven thousand seven hundred plus), humbly approach you to kindly pay attention to the degenerated and further fast degenerating electoral system of the country. Since this more than eleven thousand number is based on only one voter member signing for the whole family, the number of voters directly represented is more than forty-seven thousand. Interestingly, not even a single voter, when explained, gave a second thought while signing this petition.We ourselves have restricted the number of signatories, because of the volume of paper involved. Otherwise, crores of voters would be eager to sign this petition.

Through the election system we are following, political power has already gone into the hands of the moneyed and muscled corrupt and criminals, because our elections have come to depend solely on money and muscle power. Even the Prime Minister of India has lamented that educated, honest, service-minded persons are not coming forward in the field of politics. Not only that, educated and well-informed middle and upper class voters seem to have lost faith and interest in voting itself because they, more often than not, find that none of the candidates fielded by the political parties and Independents come up to their expectations. Most of today's politicians have lost the respect of the people. This leads to low voting percentage, particularly of the educated and better-informed voters of the country. It is only the poor, ignorant and uneducated persons whose votes are mopped up by the moneyed and muscled politicians. As a result, our democracy has degenerated into government by the poor and ignorant people, of the unconcerned and indifferent bureaucracy and for the corrupt politicians.

While celebrating the 61st Republic Day of India, at the Pensioner Bhawan, Ludhiana, more than 400 retired persons, including high-ranking civil servants, educationists, defence officers and professionals, deliberated on the issue with deep concern and felt that the present system of elections is highly inimical to the healthy development of our democracy and, if left as such, will lead to total chaos in the society. After long and sustained deliberations, we came to the following solution of the problem, which will give an adequate chance to our democracy to survive the onslaught of criminals and corrupt politicians and put it back on the path to healthy development. We put forward these suggestions for your consideration and humbly request you with all the seriousness at our command to save Indian democracy. Your considered action at this stage will leave an indelible positive mark on our democracy, for which future generations will remain ever grateful to you. The election system we propose is detailed below:

A:

In the keyboard of the voting machine add one red button at the top, indicating NOBODY. This will give a choice to the voter to reject all the candidates if he or she does not consider anyone up to the mark.

- The red button votes should be counted just as the votes of all other candidates are counted.
- The winning candidate must obtain votes more than the number of red button (Nobody) votes.
- If no candidate gets more than Red Button/Nobody votes, this would mean the majority of the voters do not elect/approve any of the candidates.
- In such a situation, the elections of such constituencies/wards should be cancelled and held anew.
- In such an eventuality, all the candidates that got rejected by the voters should be debarred for six years from contesting elections.

B:

The elections should be held at government account/cost:

, pleading for change

PIB

- The government should set up stages/pandals at prominent places in every Assembly/Parliamentary constituency.
- The number of stages (say 15-25) will depend on the size and spread of the constituency.
- Every candidate (party nominee or Independent) should get an equal chance by turn to address the voters from every stage/podium/pandal on his/her programme or vision or election manifesto.
- These pandals/podiums should be provided with adequate security, day and night, during the period of campaigning.
- No candidate should be allowed to contact the voters individually or make door-to-door calls. Because it is the individual contact or door-to-door campaigning when intoxicants, money or other considerations are passed on to the voters. No one can distribute these considerations from the podiums or pandals.
- Hence, any candidate (directly or through his/her agent/supporter) found contacting the voters individually should be considered to be indulging in electoral malpractices, which should render the concerned candidate liable to be disqualified.
- Political parties can be allotted time on TV and radio channels for putting forth their manifestoes/programmes to the people.
- The nomination fees may be increased to Rs 25,000 or more to partially meet the election expenses incurred by the government on providing pandals and security.

These steps will in totality reduce the economic costs of elections and will set healthy traditions.

We are conscious that even if, overall, it may involve some additional expenses, it will be only once. This cost will, however, certainly pay back manyfold in its turn by filtering out the criminals and the corrupt from the highly sacred and powerful profession of politics. In the following round, after cancellation of elections in affected constituencies, and for the future, the political parties and individuals will think a hundred times before putting up their candidatures.

We most humbly make a fervent appeal once again that our request on these proposals may be given serious thought and implemented in order to enable our democracy to survive the onslaught of criminals and corrupt politicians, who have made nefarious inroads into the political set-up of the country. Honourable Sirs and Excellencies, the future of our highly valued Indian democracy is in your hands. If some solid action on these lines is not taken at this stage, doom will come calling on our otherwise vibrant society.

Most respectfully, we, the voter-citizens of India:

1. Dr. S. S. Johl (Awarded Padma Bhushan), Ex-Vice-Chancellor, 2920, Gurdev Nagar, Ludhiana (Punjab), Mob: +91-98151-86766
2. S. P. Karkara, IAS (Retd), President, Senior Citizens Welfare Association, 32 Swami Vivekananda Vihar, Ludhiana, Mob: +91-98142-43643
3. Capt. Kamaljit Singh Walia, President, Gurdev Nagar Association (Regd), 2930 Gurdev Nagar, Ludhiana (Punjab), Mob: +91-9814143850
4. Dr. Lakhbir Singh Brar, Director of Horticulture (Retd), Gen Secretary, PAU Alumni Association, Ludhiana (Punjab), Mob: +91-98155-53325
5. B. R. Kaushal, Add. Registrar (Retd), Chairman, Retirees Welfare Association, Urban Estate-Phase II, Ludhiana, Mob: +91-98140-54016

(List of additional signatories with their telephone numbers as identity is enclosed)

op gahrotra

'Coalition governments are the biggest obstacles to progress'

Maharashtra's first Finance Secretary to present two successive surplus Budgets recalls his innovative streamlining measures

I was the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, and then Secretary, Planning. I was also Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce in Delhi. Unlike other bureaucrats, we who come from the Indian Financial Services cannot be transferred to any other department. Ours is a specialized job – that of managing state finances and also planning for the future. In each posting, I tried to come up with innovative ideas that have brought qualitative changes in the administration.

I was the first Finance Secretary of Maharashtra to have presented two successive surplus Budgets. What we did was to plan the expenditure of every department, seek its monthly cash flow requirement, allocate the expenditure accordingly, and present the monthly cash flow receipts before the State legislature. The net result was that wasteful expenditure was curtailed and money began to be spent where it should have been in the first place.

However, all that was trashed once I left office. In our system, politicians and, more so, bureaucrats thrive on controls. Bureaucrats are basically control freaks; they thrive on power, their ability to control things. Unlike in the private sector, where bosses have to reach out to the people, the bureaucrat is unmindful even if no one comes to him. Let the person's file remain where it is as long as the person does not come to him for redressal of his problem.

When I was Sales Tax Commissioner in Mumbai, I faced this problem of thousands of sales tax assessees who did not file returns for years. On investigation we found out that 40,000 traders had simply shut shop. However, since their sales tax number was not cancelled, their assessments kept mounting with no attempt being made by my lower ranking officers to recover the outstanding dues.

Another collateral effect of the mounting unrecovered dues was that the department had to create posts of Inspectors to manage those accounts. Besides, there was no record available to find out when the trader's account was created and how much taxes collected. In 1992, I was instrumental in computerization of sales tax records. For this, we had to keep our offices closed for two months.

After that, I made it mandatory for a computer data entry to be made before allotting sales tax account numbers to traders. Then I began pursuing my subordinate officials to secure pending dues. I set targets for recovery of taxes and dues. But still there was this problem of inoperative accounts and unrecovered dues. So I proposed amending the law and cancelling all the 40,000 inoperative accounts and issuing fresh account numbers. We placed full-page advertisements in all the newspapers and asked the traders to simply cut out the application form from the newspaper, fill it in and submit it to us.

We put up extra desks in the office to clear all the applications at one go, gave the traders their new account numbers – sans any help from the sales tax practitioners. The Sales Tax Practitioners Association was not going to like this one bit as it meant shutting down their shop. They raised a hue and cry and staged massive demonstrations. Wiping out that many inoperative accounts meant reducing that many number of officers in the department who handled those accounts, freezing recruitment for the next three years. Moreover, the sales tax practitioners lost that client base. My argument with the traders was, why do you need the help of the practitioners when you can do it yourself?

SOLARIS IMAGES

I proposed amending the law and issuing fresh account numbers. We placed full-page advertisements in all the newspapers and asked the traders to simply cut out the application form from the newspapers.

The State legislature was in session when the advertisement of the proposed law came out in the newspapers. I was hauled up before the legislature because the Opposition said I had committed breach of privilege of the House. It was just a proposed law. I explained the matter to the Speaker of the Assembly, who understood my point of view. He told me to tender an apology and the matter was closed.

However, there still remained another problem. In those days sales tax Inspectors were randomly given traders and their accounts to recover the taxes. An Inspector was given one trader from Colaba, then another from Worli and another from Bombay Central. Obviously, the Inspector would not carry out the task. So I regrouped and reallocated the areas given to the Inspectors.

Another feature I was instrumental in pushing forward was today's Value Added Tax (VAT) system. Until then, there were 14 items which were charged at various rates. The net result was that manufacturers and government officials, acting hand-in-glove, were fudging records either to evade paying duty or officials were trying to fleece the manufacturer under duress by bracketing his produce in a higher taxation category simply because he did not oblige him. It was the PV Narasimha Rao regime and Dr Manmohan Singh was the Union Finance Minister. I proposed a uniform floor rate and introduction of VAT which was supported by Dr Singh. The rest is history.

AS the head of SEBI, I introduced this now widely known practice of Know Your Customer (KYC) norm. There was no mechanism in place to ascertain the authenticity of the account holder. Besides, we were instrumental in introducing the demat account which is now widely used in the financial markets.

While I was in the Ministry of

Commerce, what struck me was that there were these two items that were put on the Restricted Items list – tallow and gold. There was no rationale behind this. Due to import restrictions, there was rampant smuggling of gold. I recommended that the government remove gold from the Restricted Items category. The move worked wonders, with gold smuggling now virtually nonexistent.

The biggest hindrance in achieving real progress today is coalition government politics. In a city like Mumbai, everybody is focusing energy on what goes on in the metropolis. You have too many blocks to development, NGOs and regional satraps like the Shiv Sena and Raj Thackeray who are out to block your path towards development at every and any given time. There are pressures and pulls in different directions rather than united commitment on matters of development. Everybody wants his share of the pie.

BUT the biggest blocks are in the finance department itself. The biggest exercise is to cut down on expenditure and raise revenue through imposition of new taxes. Since bureaucrats thrive on power, you have one department blaming another or some department facing public flak. That is because departments like police, health and education interact directly with the people.

However, the finance department often chooses to shoot down any proposal from other departments that is likely to incur expenditure for the government. The finance department is not answerable to the public. But the other departments or the Brihanmumbai Mahanagar Palika, for that matter, have to answer why malaria is spreading rampantly or why there are potholes on the roads. Little does anyone know that proposals for sanctioning funds for these departments are often shot down by the finance department.

SHARAD SAXENA

As the head of SEBI, I introduced this now widely known practice of Know Your Customer (KYC) norm. There was no mechanism in place to ascertain the authenticity of the account holder.

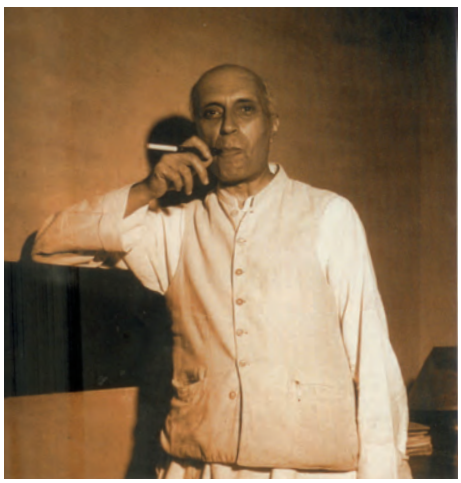
Our bureaucratic and administrative system is hybrid in nature, though it has taken several concepts from the British. The British used the police as an instrument of terror, with one cop keeping watch on 10 villages under his jurisdiction. So, he naturally resorted to using brutal techniques. It is true to some extent even today.

There have been many good schemes that the government introduced, like the cotton monopoly procurement scheme. The intention was to assure a minimum assured procurement price for cotton growers. Cotton is such a dangerous commodity to store, that the growers start making distress sales or mortgage it even before the crop is due for harvesting. The situation is ripe for the private traders and moneylenders to exploit.

The government has not augmented its storage capacity by building more godowns, grain silos or depots in the State. Also, the greedy cotton growers tend to mix in stones or add water to the cotton bales to increase weight. Once the water evaporates, the weight reduces, leaving the government machinery cheated as it is supposed to buy all the cotton produce. Another problem in the procurement system is that often the traders collude with the growers for the sake of commission and put inferior cotton into a higher grade category.

As for the current hue and cry over shortage of storage space to store foodgrain and agricultural produce, the lack of infrastructure is the problem. The government has simply not bothered to create adequate storage capacity across the country. g

by Diptendra Raychaudhuri



Title: **Prime Ministers of India 1947-2009**
Author: **Compiled and edited by Neena Jha and Shivnath Jha**
Photographs by Vijender Tyagi and others
Publisher: **Bismillah: The beginning foundation**
Price: Rs 7995

SOME books make us hark back, and the experience is rather like glancing at a mirror that reflects lost expectations and squandered possibilities while encompassing pomp and show. This is true of *Prime Ministers of India*, a compilation of articles by historians, observers and scribes.

Read these lines by Inderjit Badhwar and be sadly reminded of the leaders of the day who are gradually making India overtly dependent on the US: "Her dogged stand in which the Indian army helped the democratically elected Mujibur Rehman come to power in a newly-independent Bangladesh and subsequent defeat of Pakistan was in the teeth of opposition from Nixon and Kissinger who sent the US Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean. The leader of a poor, half-literate nation which had once been dependent on food aid from the US had had the temerity to stand up to Uncle Sam when the integrity of her nation had been at stake...."

Come to Morarji Desai, to the days of his fall, and read Hasmukh Shah and Mira Desai's words: "When George Fernandes after making a brilliant defence of the regime in Parliament parted company within hours, the battle lines were drawn. A group of Akali leaders called on Desai and offered him their support. Akalis liked him. They also requested him to agree to three of their pending demands... Desai's reply was characteristic. In substance it was: your demands are easy to meet but I cannot make a deal – *main saudabaji nahin karunga*."

Vir Sanghvi, Sunil Shastri and Mani Shankar Aiyar throw up interesting personal anecdotes. The piece on Charan Singh is a bit too critical, overlooking his role in ending the Congress hegemony in India's political system. The article on Chandra Shekhar is similarly harsh. This is not to say that the writers' arguments are flawed but they jar in a compilation of articles in which no persona is portrayed in black or white (except those written by close associates). The photographs, which make up half the book, add equal value despite the fact that all are not captioned. On the whole, a commendable effort in compilation and editing by Neena and Shivnath Jha. g

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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

Exercise caution and time your exit

THE Sensex celebrated the return to 20,000 amidst doubtful *sarkari* data of GDP growth, inflation and industrial production which only the foreigners appear to believe since the domestic funds and retail investors have been continuous sellers. According to Jim Rogers, India is no doubt growing and companies participating in that growth deserve generous valuations. But what portion of these valuations is based on fundamentals and what portion is driven by sheer liquidity? The latter aspect is worrying.

Central banks in the developed world have been keeping their policy rates low and talk of a new round of quantitative easing is floating around again, leading to a significant drop in interest rates. Excessively low yields have led to a search for higher yields which, coupled with a weaker dollar and high growth rates promised by India, may continue to see the flood of liquidity remaining strong in the near future.

The increase in advance tax collections, however, gives some confidence that the performance of Indian companies remains robust. But the valuations with a Nifty PE multiple approaching 26 and the price to book value of around 4 gives little comfort amidst global uncertainties. The deteriorating current account deficit at 3.5-4 per cent of GDP is another reason to worry. A stronger rupee makes matters worse by encouraging imports and discouraging exports. Things are fine so long as foreigners are financing, but the moment their confidence is shaken for reasons beyond Indian control – such as an oil price shock or global developments like the European debt crisis – these inflows will disappear and fast turn into outflows, creating multiple problems. All this may lead to a sharp fall in the markets with the only saving grace being the domestic institutions and retail investors who have ready cash and are waiting for a correction to happen, thereby limiting the likely downside.

The Indian growth story has been mainly driven by domestic demand. But measures taken by policymakers to achieve the twin objectives of growth and controlling inflation are expected to curtail growth in the coming quarters. The private consumption demand is seen to be stagnating and government consumption is lower than last year. The credit off-take testifies to this. The growth in bank credit, excluding the telecom and oil companies, is nothing to cheer about. Rather, a large chunk of credit is accounted for by sensitive sectors like real estate.

The banks may be showing a high loan growth but that has more to do with debt restructuring than creating new capacities. The RBI's Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR) system has seen a sharp jump in the number of cases of late. As per a report in *Mint*, the CDR system was dealing with 266 cases at the end of July 2010, up from 239 a year ago. Aggregate debt being restructured also rose to Rs 1,186 billion from Rs 1088 billion during the same period. This makes banks vulnerable to a sharp drop in earnings, exposing them to market losses in a rising interest scenario. This also has serious implications for sustainability of growth.

Investors are therefore advised to use abundant caution while selecting stocks. They can witness a sharp rally in mid and small caps in days to come, but stock selection will be the key. Lots of money can still be made by choosing the right sectors and stocks in this segment coupled with the swiftness with which you enter and exit.

Investors can witness a sharp rally in mid and small caps, but stock selection will be the key. Lots of money can still be made by choosing the right sectors and stocks coupled with the swiftness with which you enter and exit.

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THE company, with an operating history of more than 50 years, is into formulations, synthetics, nutraceuticals and bio-tech with a focus on therapeutic groups of ORS, opthalmologicals, dermatologicals, antibiotics, cardio and diabetes and has well known brands such as Electral, Enerzal and so on. The company, with an R&D focus, has maintained an ROE in excess of 20 per cent for the past 10 years with a top- and bottom-line growth in excess of 15 per cent, zero debt and excess cash position. At an EPS of Rs 8 the stock is available at a PE of just 12.5 as against the industry average of more than 24 with a dividend of Rs 1.75 per share on a Re 1 share. At an index of 20,000 plus, a stock like this, belonging to the traditionally safe sector of pharma, offers moderate to good returns at low risk. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles *does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.*

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SHASHIKANT SHARMA
The 1976-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre is now Secretary, Information Technology in the Government of India.

USHA MATHUR
The 1974-batch IRAS officer has become Secretary, Parliamentary Affairs.

SANJAY RASTOGI
The 1991-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre on central deputation has been posted as Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) in the Commerce Ministry.

AJOY ACHARYA
The 1976-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre is now Secretary, Inter-State Council, Ministry of Home Affairs.

N SANYAL
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre has become Additional Secretary, Food.

ASHOK LAVASA
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Haryana cadre has been posted as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Power.

ATUL KUMAR TIWARI
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.

GSG AYYANGAR
The 1987-batch IAS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre has been posted as Joint Secretary (Operations) in the NATGRID.

AKHILESH MISHRA
The 1989-batch IFS officer has been posted in the MEA as Joint Secretary.

MRIDU PAWAN DAS
The 2004-batch IFS officer has joined the MEA as Under Secretary in the UNP Division.

SK MATTU
The 1977-batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre is now Delhi-based Chief Resident Commissioner with the Uttarakhand government.

RITESH KUMAR SINGH
The 1996-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has become Private Secretary to Jaipal Reddy, Minister for Urban Development.

DIWAKAR NATH MISHRA
The 2000-batch IAS officer of the Assam- Meghalaya cadre has been posted as Deputy Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat.

SHAKEEL AHMED
The 1995-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre has been appointed Secretary to Meghalaya Governor Ranjit Shekhar Mooshahary.

AVINASH KUMAR
The 1993-batch IAS officer has been appointed Divisional Commissioner of Kalhan in Jharkhand.

CHARANJIT SINGH
The 1990-batch IFS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has joined the Government of India as Director, Rural Development.

APPAROO VERELLI
The 1993-batch IRSS officer has joined as Director, Power in the Government of India.

G KAMAL VARDHAN RAO
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre has become Chairman of the Tobacco Board, based at Guntur.

G ASHOK KUMAR
The 1991-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been posted as Director, Power.

SANJEET SINGH
The Additional Commissioner of Income Tax (ACIT) has been transferred from the Kanpur to the Lucknow region.

JAWED ASHRAF
The 1991-batch IFS officer has been posted as Joint Secretary in charge of the Americas' Division in the MEA.

DEEPIKA SURI SRIVASTAVA
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The 1994-batch IFS officer has been moved from the WANA Division in the MEA to the post of Director.

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Haryana cadre has been appointed Commissioner, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).

DEV RAJ NAGAR
The 1976-batch IPS officer has been promoted to the rank of DG in Uttar Pradesh.

AJAY MUKUND RANADE
The 1995-batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre has been posted as Deputy Chairman of the Kolkata Port Trust.

AMITABH PATHAK
The 1977-batch IPS officer has become Police Commissioner, Ahmedabad.

SUBHASH KUMAR
The 1977-batch IAS officer has been appointed Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand.

RAKESH JARUHAR
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Jharkhand cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

PC SABARWAL
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

BK DEV VARMA
The 1979-batch IAS officer has been promoted to the rank of ACS in Meghalaya.

VIVEK KUMAR
The 1990-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary, Petroleum.

AJAY BHATNAGAR
The 1989-batch IPS officer has been promoted as IG, CISF Airport Security.

SHAMBHU KALLOLIKAR
The 1991-batch IAS officer is now Secretary to the Tamil Nadu Governor, Surjit Singh Barnala.

RN RAVI
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Kerala cadre has become Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau.

MAHAVIR SINGH BALI
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

MANJARI JARUHAR
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Jharkhand cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

ANIRUDH UPPAL
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

ALAXANDER DANIEL
The 1976-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has been promoted to the rank of DG.

L RADHAKRISHNAN
The 1984-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre has been appointed Chairman of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

ANUP K PUJARI
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has been appointed Director General, Foreign Trade (DGFT).

AK MANGOTRA
The 1978-batch IAS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre is now Director General of Supply & Disposal (DGS&D).

KJ SRINIVASA
The 2002-batch IFS officer has become Regional Passport Officer (RPO) in Bengaluru.

Moving On: ias officers retiring in October 2010

ANDHRA PRADESH
Ashok Kumar Goel (1974)
Bir Singh Parsheera (1974)
GUJARAT
RM Patel (1997)
BIHAR
UN Panjiyar (1973)
S Jalaja (1974)
HARYANA
G Prasanna Kumar (1975)
DD Gautam (1991)
JP Kaushik (1991)
JHARKHAND
Sarvendu Tathagat (1994)
KARNATAKA
Shantanu Consul (1974)
Abhijit Dasgupta (1975)
MAHARASHTRA
CS Sangitrao (1987)
MADHYA PRADESH
Ram Kinkar Gupta (1995)
MANIPUR-TRIPURA
Shashi Prakash (1976)
UTTAR PRADESH
Giriraj Prasad Verma (1977)
Pawan Kumar (1996)
UNION TERRITORY
YD Thongchi (1992)

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Who's laughing all the way to the bank?

FOR a banker, becoming Executive Director is a cherished dream and, consequently, the competition is cut-throat. The Finance Ministry recently appointed several EDs in various banks. Now, those who did not make it to these coveted posts have a story to tell. They say that those who did make it did so after having coughed up huge sums. As to the extent of these sums, it's a fair guess.

The new EDs rubbish these allegations, claiming that they were selected on the basis of merit. North Block babus say that, though the selection took almost six months, everything is above board. However, it is well known that there is no smoke without fire.

The affair does have a silver lining, though. For the first time in six decades of independence, a Dalit has been picked for the post of CMD.

'Life in Delhi is miserable'

IAS officers are usually very guarded in speech and demeanour. However, once in a while, the trying circumstances in which they find themselves compel them to let the mask slip. Recently, the following exchange took place between two senior officers in Delhi.

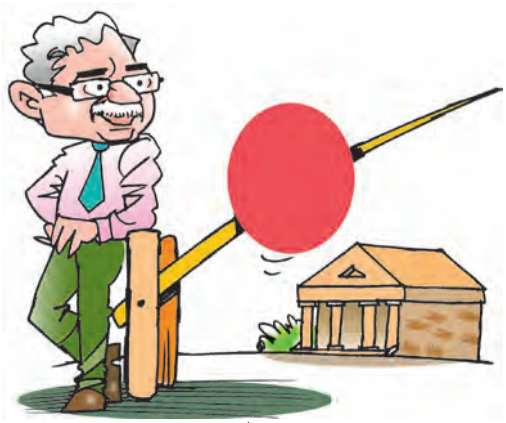
One asked, "So how are you doing?" The other burst out, "Life is third rate." The first was

shocked: "How do you mean?" The disgruntled officer, who is a seasoned bureaucrat and has also served as PS to a Minister of a minority community, replied, "In my cadre state, I was happy. Life was organized and peaceful. In Delhi, life is miserable. I would be happy if this is published somewhere. Then I would be transferred back to my state."

IDBI matches up to its slogan

"AKHIR ma ke pyar ki koi kimat thodi na hoti hai (After all, a mother's love is priceless)" is the new slogan of IDBI Bank. And newly appointed IDBI Chairman RM Malla understands well the sentiments of the bank's customers. He has announced a waiver of the fees for all customer services, something that's a little worrisome for other PSU banks. Malla's initiatives have been given a thumbs-up by the stock markets.

India has 31 crore savings accounts as of date. This means that 83 per cent of the population does not have bank accounts. Malla's initiative is a likely road map for achieving financial inclusion.



Windfall for SP among chinars

FROM Kashmir comes this tale of a policeman who recognizes when opportunity knocks. A filmmaker and his team, with all the requisite paraphernalia, landed up somewhere between Srinagar and Udhampur. Having passed through a series of police pickets in the terrorist-plagued area, the team was aghast when told there was no accommodation available. Then the residents tipped off the filmmaker: contact the SP, he may bail you out.

Sure enough, the SP proffered a solution. The entire crew could stay in his house. Delighted, the filmmaker and the team stayed a week in the SP's house while shooting.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

Then they wound up, packed and were about to depart when the SP, amid valedictions, asked for a week's rent. The filmmaker ended up paying a large sum, equivalent to what a high-end hotel would have charged. g

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Kuala Lumpur - 2 Nts,
Genting - 2 Nts

Incl.: Airfare with all taxes, Stay Per person, Breakfast, Half day city tour of Sin & Kul, Outdoor Genting theme park tickets, Over Night train Kul to Sin, All transfers, **Visa fee for Sin & Kul.**

* Add on : Sentosa, Night safari, Sunway Lagoon, KL Tower Tkt., Indoor Theme Park Tkt., 7 Dinners, Putrajaya Tour Just ₹ 10,999/- p.p.

SINGAPORE & THAILAND

₹ 35,999/-* — 7 Days

Sin- 2 Nts, Bkk - 2 Nts, Pattaya - 2 Nts.

Incl.: Airfare with all taxes, Stay per person, Breakfast, City tour, Coral Island tour with lunch, All transfers, City tour of Singapore & Bangkok, Singapore Visa.

*Free Thailand Visa on arrival

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Deluxe ₹ 38,999/-*
Luxury ₹ 48,999/-*

Hong Kong - 3 Nts,
Macau - 2 Nts

Incl.: Airfare with all taxes, Stay per person, Breakfast, City tour of Hong Kong, Macau tour with Lunch, Ferry Transfers, Return Ferry Tickets, All Transfers.

Free !! House of Dancing Water show in Macau with Luxury Package

Add on Star Cruise at extra cost.

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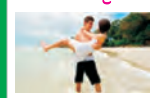

Regular ₹ 43,499/-*
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Incl.: Airfare with all taxes, Visa fee, Stay, Transfers, Breakfast, Dinner voucher, Half day city tour of Kul & Sin, Sentosa under water world, Dolphin show & Universal studio, Full day tour with outdoor theme park rides in Genting.

HONG KONG & MACAU

₹ 74,555/-* — 6N/7D

Port blair - 1nt, Hong - Kong - 3nts, Macau - 2nts.

Incl.: Airfare with all taxes, Breakfast & dinner, Half day city tour of Hong-Kong, Macau tour with lunch, Day trip to Disney Land, Return ferry tickets, Sightseeing in Port blair & all transfers.

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Alor Grand	-	₹ 15,777/-*	O Hotel	-	₹ 20,999/-*
Whispering Palms	-	₹ 15,999/-*	Cidade De Goa	-	₹ 21,333/-*
Bogmallo Beach Resort	-	₹ 16,666/-*	Alila Diwa Goa	-	₹ 23,300/-**
Neelam The Grand	-	₹ 16,999/-*	The Leela	-	₹ 25,400/-**

Incl.: Airfare, Stay per person on twin sharing basis, 3 nights 4 days, All meals, Transfers, Sightseeing, all taxes. **No Sightseeing.

KERALA — FIXED DEPARTURE
on 07- 12, 14 - 19, 21 - 26, 28 Oct. - 02 Nov. - 2010

₹ 16,555/-*

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Incl.: Return Airfare, Stay per person on twin sharing basis, Breakfast, Sightseeing by A/c Vehicle, all taxes

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FIXED DEPARTURE
on 5-8 , 6-9 , 7-10 , 8-11, 10-13 , 11-14 , 14-17 October - 2010

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Shimla	–	Radisson Jass	₹ 6,999/-*	MAP	Nainital	–	Chevrons fairheavens	₹ 3,333/-*	MAP
Shimla	–	Bridge View Regency	₹ 2,777/-	MAP	Nainital	–	Vikram Vintage	₹ 4,750/-	MAP
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Corbett	–	Quality Inn Den	₹ 4,000/-	AP	Sariska	–	Sariska Palace	₹ 5,000/-	CP

Incl.: Stay Per person on twin sharing basis, Meals as per plan and All taxes.

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2 NTS. - GANGTOK,
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Incl.: Stay per person with Breakfast, Sightseeing, all taxes

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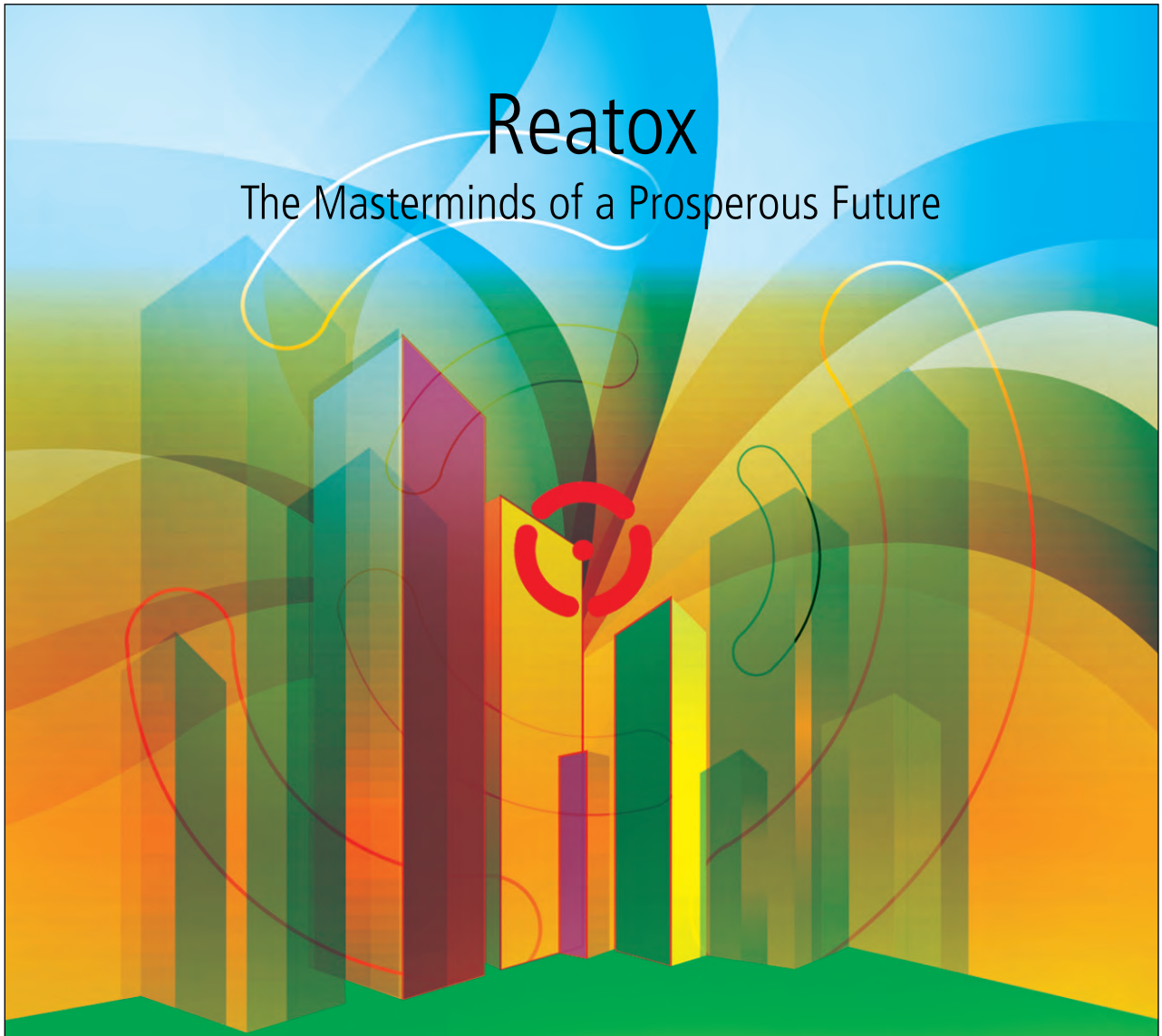

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